THE STORY OF THE INDIAN MUTINY



An Incident at Agra
(After the black and white drawing by R. CATON WOODVILLE)

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THE STORY OF THE INDIAN MUTINY

BY

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"THE CONQUERORS OF PERU" "THE CONQUERORS OF MEXICO"
"THE BOOK OF PIRATES" ETC.



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CHAPTER I

DOUBTS AND FOREBODINGS

FOR a hundred years 'John Company' had reigned in India. Beginning, about the year 1612, with a few humble factories on the west coast, "The Governors and Company of Merchants in London trading to East India" (a long-winded title quickly shortened to "The East India Company") gradually built up its power, its main interest being the increase of its trade, which yielded enormous profits. The clerks employed by the Company had to know how to use a sword as well as a quill pen, for they often had to throw down the one and snatch up the other to defend their warehouses. As the years went on the lands of the Company increased, until, in the year 1757, the greatest soldier who has ever worked as a clerk at a desk in India—Robert Clive—carved out for his masters an Empire which embraced the rich provinces of Bengal, Behar, and Orissa. From that year the natives reckoned that the British *raj*, or dominion, had struck its roots deep in the land; year after year since then the pride and wealth and power of the British had grown, until the shadow of their name stretched over the continent from the snowy peaks

of the Himalayas to the green seas washing the shores of Ceylon.

In 1857 a hundred years had passed, and because of the increasing pride and power of the British all was not well. The seeds of discontent had been sown, and thoughts of rebellion against the power of the white man were shooting up in dark places. In what rank and terrible growths these thoughts were to end it is the purpose of this book to relate.

. . . . . .

"Colonel Jacob says that the Bengal Army is rotten to the core, and that it doesn't know what discipline is."

"You do wrong to read the book, my boy. I think it disgraceful that such wild opinions should be allowed to be published."

It was the afternoon of a day early in January, 1857. Three men were seated talking in the big sitting-room of a bungalow at Barrackpore, a town not far from Calcutta. Two of the men were elderly; one, in the undress of an officer of the 34th Native Infantry, was Major Trent; the other was a prominent member of the Indian Civil Service, by name James Douglas. He was Political Officer; in other words, he represented the interests of the British Government (who, since the time of Pitt, had taken over the political control of the territories possessed by the East India Company) in a small native State on the southern border of Bengal. The younger man, who had made

the reference to Colonel Jacob's opinion, was the son of Mr Douglas, and was a young lieutenant in the Bengal Army.

For more than a year rumours had been brought by every spy in the Government service, and reports had been docketed and stored up in many pigeon-holes in Government offices, concerning the strange and unaccountable unrest which was said to exist among the 200,000 native troops who formed the Bengal Army. A good many of the officials of the Civil Service, and almost the whole of the military officers, looked on such rumours as inventions of foolish alarmists or of weak-minded individuals, and the generality of Army officers were offended and scandalized at any hint of suspicion that perhaps the sepoys of their own regiments, who drilled so smartly on the parade-ground every morning, were perhaps not so reliable, not so loyal, not so satisfied with their officers and rulers as they were supposed to be. The *Views and Opinions* of Colonel John Jacob, published as far back as 1851, had especially called forth the wrath of every officer from Meerut to Calcutta, and rarely did two or three of them meet without levelling scorn and disgust at the criticisms he had passed in his pages on the military conditions in the army of Bengal.

Major Trent's opinion as expressed in reply to the young subaltern's quotation was the view usually taken by Army men of the work in question.

"My dear Trent, I don't agree," said Mr Douglas. "If things are not what they should be, it would be the height of folly for us to blind ourselves to the truth. I share the opinions of Sir Henry Lawrence, as he has often expressed them. Government under Lord Dalhousie has been moving very fast. There has been too great an impatience to force Western methods and practices upon the natives, and many of the prejudices both of Hindus and Mussulmans have thereby been wounded."

"But, my dear Douglas," said Major Trent, "whatever the late Governor-General may have done to incur the resentment of native princes, I do not, on my word, understand why people should be so quick to question the loyalty of our sepoys."

"I am quite willing to admit," replied Mr Douglas, "that there are many fine and loyal fellows among our sepoys; that on the whole we have reason to be proud of the record of the Army; but things have changed of late. Many officers are like yourself, who treat your men with courtesy and kindness, and they in return look up to you with affection and confidence. But tell me, how many officers are there who dislike their work and strive all they can to get promotion to a civil berth; who take no interest in their men, and get through their duties with as little trouble as possible?"

"No doubt your are right as regards some officers," was the reply. "The men soon see when and if an

officer cares for them; but I refuse to believe that disloyalty and corruption are as rampant in our Army as some alarmists affect to believe."

"Very well," returned Mr Douglas; "but you must allow that several changes and events of recent years have shaken the confidence of the sepoy in his faith concerning us."

"In what way? I suppose you refer to the refusal by Headquarters to give the extra pay for foreign service in Scinde? I agree that that was a bad business. The men were justly entitled to it."

"What did they do?" asked young Douglas.

"Some of them mutinied, and refused to march into the Scinde country," was the reply. "They had been accustomed to receive extra pay and allowances when engaged in foreign service. Scinde was not annexed then. The Government refused to grant the extra money, and as result the Bengal Army was shaken in its belief in the word of honour of the English Government."

"Since I've been out here, too," went on the young man, "I've heard it said that the fact of our taking several English regiments out of the country to fight against the Russians in the Crimea three years ago excited the surprise of many keen-witted natives. 'What,' they said, 'has the English *raj* so few white soldiers that they have to take them from India?'"

"Then, again, I must admit," said Major Trent, who spoke with evident reluctance of the sins of his

beloved *baba-log*, or children, the sepoys, "that Lord Dalhousie's command to the 38th Native Regiment to go for service across the sea to Burma was utterly indefensible. The men had enlisted on condition that they were not to cross the 'Black Water,' which they feared and hated; but instead of calling for volunteers, who no doubt would eventually have come forward, he insisted on sending them willy-nilly. Dalhousie had to give in, and of course the story was in all the native lines and bazaars through the length and breadth of Bengal in a day or two."

"Such things shake the confidence of the native soldiers," said Mr Douglas, "who after all are only simple fellows, in many ways very like children."

Major Trent rose to go. "Well," he said, "I must be off. I shall see you both to-night at the Brigadier's dinner."

"I can see, father," said young Douglas when the Major had left the room, "that you feel more keenly on this matter than you were willing to allow the Major to see. Are things really in a bad way?"

"I will not say they are in a bad way exactly, my boy," replied Mr Douglas, after a thoughtful pause; "but there is evidently immense unrest throughout the native quarters and in the Army. In fact, large sections of the people are in a state of bitter hostility to us, and I am assured are only waiting a favourable opportunity to rise against us. The authorities have been warned for months past,

but they ignore all warnings, and are so confident of themselves and of the power of the English Government that they seem to despise all you can say. Except, I should say, our two wisest and greatest men, the most sagacious rulers we have—Sir John and Sir Henry Lawrence. They know India and the Indian mind as no one else knows them; they are forewarned, but even their voices are powerless to open the ears of these other men in whose hands lies the government of this country."

"How do you know this, father? What is being done that makes you sure that this unrest is working up to some outburst?"

"I know it from two sources," replied Mr Douglas; "not only from my spies, who keep me informed of what is said in the bazaars, but from intelligent and friendly Hindu and Mussulman gentlemen. You know, my boy, from your reading of history that the most bitter wars have been those waged by reason of religious hatred. God forbid that it should ever come to bloodshed here in India, but many of the natives are convinced that we are determined to force them to become Christians."

"But such a belief is absurd," said the young man. "No Englishman wishes to force his religion upon the natives."

"No Englishman?" was the retort. "I wish I could believe that. But the missionaries have recently sent circulars to many prominent natives

trying to prove that the Christian faith will absorb all native faiths. Moreover, Colonel Wheler, of the 34th Native Infantry, has for years been forcing his religion on the sepoys, and preaching to natives everywhere in and out of season. But in other ways the suspicion of such a plot has been encouraged by our own actions. The Brahmin priests hate us, and the Mohammedan *maulevis*, or learned men, suspect us. We know and we teach too much. Their young men are learning Western ideas from us, and begin to despise their own priests and teachers. Once the Brahmin priest was able to say that all good usages, all good inventions, came from God by their special intercession. To gain further good things the priests were paid by their ignorant flocks, and so waxed rich and fat. But we have brought in the 'fire-carriage' or locomotive on the iron road, and the 'lightning post' or telegraph, and men are carried at marvellous speed, and messages are sent to and from great distances in a few minutes. Then, again, the natives remember how we tried to make the prisoners in the jails give up cooking their own food and wished to put in cooks to prepare the food. That, they said, was a treacherous attempt to defile them, and there were riots in the prisons and the towns. A prisoner killed a judge with the brass drinking-vessel which, as you know, every native carries about with him, and which no one but himself must use. We tried to take it away in the prisons and to make the fellows use earthenware

vessels. That also led to riots. In these and in other ways we have disturbed the mind of the native, until there seems to be a great fear throughout the Presidency, which gives rise to all manner of wild rumours and evil tales."

"But surely all these things by themselves, though of course they indicate unrest and discontent, will not lead to any outbreak?" asked the young man.

"By themselves they are not much to be feared," said Mr Douglas, "but I greatly fear that they are being turned to account by people whom we have made our enemies—and we have many among the princes and aristocracy of the Mahrattas and Mohammedans."

"You mean in connexion with the recent annexation of Oudh?"

"My dear boy," returned the father, "Oudh is only the last of a long series of usurpations (as I fear I must call them) committed by our late Governor-General, Lord Dalhousie, who, together with much that is praiseworthy, has caused and done much that has sowed seeds of trouble the results of which we shall reap later. It was he who began to deny the right which native princes always possessed of adopting a successor when they had no natural male heirs. In such cases he considered the princely line had lapsed and thereupon annexed the country. Satarah was acquired in that way in 1849, then followed Sambhalpore, Nagpore, and Jhansi. How have the

natives taken these annexations, as we call them? They would be quite willing to accept them as the result of conquest, but the refusal of the right of adoption was looked upon as greed and injustice. The result has been that every prince in the country trembles, and wonders if his princedom will be seized next; and the people who have been dispossessed and whose palaces and goods have been sold up hate us bitterly."

"But surely, dad, you must allow that Oudh was most wretchedly governed by the weak king?"

"Admitted," was the reply; "but we should have followed the advice of our greatest administrator, a man for whom my admiration is unbounded, I mean Sir Henry Lawrence. There is no man in India who can approach him for far-sighted statesmanship, knowledge of the natives, their thoughts, their weaknesses, and their fine points. He has condemned the annexation of Oudh in no uncertain terms. He has advised that we should govern the country for the benefit of its people, and should make no profit out of its revenues. But we have ignored his advice. The King of Oudh, feeble-minded though he was, had always been our friend. Why, then, ask the natives, should we have annexed his country? In Oudh this action has created thousands of enemies, not only among people in the province itself, but in the ranks of our Bengal Army, the greater part of which has been recruited from Oudh."

"So that you think we are estranging both our Hindu and our Mohammedan subjects?"

"Both, according to what I learn, are deeply resentful toward us. Our new system of land settlement, under which we have dispossessed thousands of little aristocrats and have thrust into penury multitudes of old families who have hitherto been proud of their position and of their wealth, has roused the passions of anger and revenge among both Hindus and Mussulmans. We have made no difference between either; both equally have felt the crushing weight of our Western system of government, which has been too heavily applied to a people who have ever been used to quite different forms of government."

"I am very sorry indeed to hear what you say, father," said young Douglas; "but I know you do not speak without being able to justify all you state. Indeed, what you tell me now only confirms what I read the other day in an old volume of the *Calcutta Review*, in an article written by Sir Henry Lawrence. It struck me as most strange that the warnings of so great an authority should be so long ignored by the powers that be. He said that a revolt of the sepoys will assuredly come unless we take steps to prevent it."

"That has been his opinion for the last twelve years," replied Mr Douglas. "To some it implies that any disturbance will be merely of a military character. But he is also alive to the fact that any

outbreak will be wider than that: it will be taken up by the princes and aristocrats—it will be political as well. There is one disaffected person whom I mistrust deeply. We have refused to give him the pension which we gave his adopted father, the Peishwa of Bithoor. I refer to Nana Sahib. He affects to be our sincere friend, but my spies tell a different tale. If I am not greatly mistaken he is the centre of a deep plot which may wreck our Indian Empire. Believe me, we shall hear more of that man."

CHAPTER II

WHAT THE NATIVE THOUGHT

A FEW days after the conversation which is recorded in the previous chapter a native workman, or 'classie,' went out of the cartridge manufactory at Dum-Dum, a place not far from Calcutta, and passed a sepoy soldier of the 2nd Grenadiers. The classie was a man of low caste, while the sepoy was a high-class Brahmin. The latter walked aside as the classie approached him, as if he feared to be contaminated. The low-caste workman stopped and smiled with a sneer.

"Give me a drink from your *lotah*, soldier," he said, pointing to the brass drinking-vessel which was hung at the sepoy's belt. This was never allowed to leave the soldier's possession, since if it was used by a person of lower caste the owner became contaminated.

"Thou fool," replied the sepoy. "How can I let thee drink from that which thy touch would defile?"

"You think much of your caste," said the workman with a sneer; "but wait a little. The *sahib-log* [white gentlemen] will soon make high and low caste on one level."

"How meanest thou?"

"In the factory there they are making a new kind of cartridge. Beef fat and hogs' lard are being used in the paper which your holy lips will have to touch, and all you sepoys will have to use them. Then where will be your caste?"

The classie walked off with a mocking laugh, while the Brahmin soldier gazed at him with horror on his face.

To a high-class Hindu such a piece of news was worse than a condemnation to death. The bullock was a sacred animal to him, and to eat or touch any part of its flesh was impious, and would instantly bring about the loss of caste. To lose his caste was to be thrust out from amid his relatives and friends like a pariah dog; no kinsman would own him, his very children would avoid him, and he would have to live with the street-sweepers, the grass-cutters, the water-carriers—men and women who, to his Brahminical mind, were so low of caste as to be like the dogs.

The horrified grenadier rushed away to the cantonments where, each in his little hut, the soldiers of his regiment lived, with wives and children and numerous relatives, who lived upon their pay. Soon the news spread through the lines of huts, and every one fell to talking of it with anger and fear in their hearts. Few of them disbelieved the tale; to most it seemed to confirm what their priests and wise men, both Hindu and Mussulman, had long asserted,

namely, that it was the intention of the *sahib-log* to rob them treacherously of their caste, and thus compel them to come into the only religion left open to them, that of the Christians. The latter were eaters of pigs and cattle, they disbelieved in the gods of both the Hindu and the Mohammedan, and were therefore unclean heathens. Rather than embrace their religion, the sepoys of the Indian Army would suffer death.

The distressing news quickly circulated throughout Bengal, and in every cantonment was sullenly accepted as the truth. In the old days, when the sepoy had confidence in his white officer, the native soldier would have gone to that officer and asked why this cartridge was being made. But now the soldiers whispered among themselves; they kept their feelings to themselves, and the white men knew nothing of the anger, the panic terror, and the disgust which were gradually filling the ranks of the Bengal Army with the seeds of mutiny.

If, indeed, the sepoys had asked whether a change so repugnant to the ideas of both Hindu and Mussulman was really to be introduced into the musketry instruction of the Army, their officers would have had to confess that such a tremendous blunder *was* contemplated. The musket hitherto used in the Indian Army, commonly known as 'Brown Bess,' required that the paper cartridge to be used with it should be bitten off at the end before being rammed down the barrel of

the gun. It was proposed to introduce an improved fire-arm, the Enfield rifle, which required that the cartridge should be greased. This also had to be bitten or torn before being used. By some almost incredible oversight the fat of cows and pigs was used for the purpose of greasing the new cartridges, though as yet none of them had actually been given out.

The mere report, however, that the grease used was formed of the fat of the animals mentioned was sufficient to instil terror in the minds of the ignorant and suspicious native soldiers.

Those who had long nursed enmity against the British rule now seized an opportunity so favourable for their schemes. The sepoys were already infuriated against the Government by real grievances, and in this blunder concerning the cartridges the agitators saw the match that would set ablaze the smouldering passions of the people.

The conversation which went on one day a little later in January, in the shadow of a big banyan-tree on the outskirts of a village not far from Delhi, was being reduplicated over and over again every day throughout the length and breadth of Bengal.

The elders of the village were seated discussing the strange rumours which were passing from village to village in these days. Among them were two of their sons, sepoys on leave of absence, one from Meerut and the other from Cawnpore. It was these men

who were confirming by what they said the vague fears of the villagers.

"The *sahib-log* are traitors—they are sly as foxes," said one soldier, Shumshoodeen Khan. "Once they were guardians of the poor and givers of benefits, but now they stint and scrape like a very housewife. Also, they mean evil to our religion, for it is their plan that all Hindus shall be made Christians."

"Once, also," said the other, by name Teeka Sing, "they loved us—we were their *baba-log*, their children—but now they love those wolves, the Sikhs, whom we helped them to conquer. They despise us so much that they are raising an army of thirty thousand Sikh dogs, and when that is done they will disband us."

"Surely, brother," said one of the old villagers, "it is not true what is said, that the sahibs have a plan to destroy our religion?"

"It is true, Siddu," replied Shumshoodeen Khan, the soldier from Cawnpore. "I heard it from Azimoolah himself, the princely friend of Nana Sahib, Peishwa of Bithoor. The Queen has sent out this Lord Sahib Canning for that express purpose—the Hindus and Mussulmans of India are to be made Christians, come what may. 'But,' said the Lord Sahib, 'it will be a huge task. I shall first have to slay three hundred thousand holy and learned men, the teachers of both religions, our *moulvies* and *pundits*.' 'Nevertheless,' said the Queen, 'let it be done!' And," ended the speaker, "it is to be done."

"Why is it," asked the other, speaking with passion in his voice, "that now they have made a new oath for young soldiers joining our ranks—an oath that they shall go across the Black Water and fight wherever the sahibs desire them? They know that by so doing we risk the losing of our caste. Why do they make a law that our widows may remarry? Why has the Mem-Sahib done so much to get our native women converted to the Christian faith, and why have their colonel sahibs preached to every one to become Christians and brothers, and their missionaries sent abroad a printed paper telling us all to be of the faith of those that brought in the lightning wire and the fire carriage?"

"And these evil cartridges, smeared with the fat of pigs and cows!" cried the other, "what does that mean? We bite them every time we fire our guns, and thus we are defiled."

"But," said one old village elder, who had himself served in the Bengal Army, and had been servant to an English officer and learnt much of the ways of the sahibs, "I am told that none of the evil cartridges has yet been issued, except to those few who are learning to shoot with the new rifle."

"That is what the sahibs say," replied the soldier from Cawnpore; "but their minds are deep and their lies are sly. All their cartridges are things of defilement, and we men of the 2nd Cavalry have sworn——"

The soldier checked himself. Toward them a stranger was coming, a villager from some distant place. In one hand he held a spear, while in the other was a round cake, flat and small, similar to those which every Hindu makes for himself for his daily food. He approached the white-bearded headman of the village and greeted him. Then, handing him the cake, or *chupatti*, he said:

"It is for the elders. From the south to the north, from the east to the west."

"Whence and why?" asked the elder.

"That is all," replied the messenger. "Do thou pass it on as we do."

Men looked at the *chupatti* and then at each other in silence. Then one of the sepoys, having muttered to the other, spoke aloud:

"It is the sign," he said. "The holy Mussulman, the Moulvie of Fyzabad, and the Nana Sahib, Lord of Bithoor, have sent this as a sign that all hearts should take courage. The time is near now."

"What time?" asked one.

The soldier smiled and replied grimly:

"*Sub lal hoga hi*—when everything is to become red."

"Nay," said Doorga Sing, the headman; "it is an ancient way of sending on news. My father's father has told me of it."

"And what is the news this sends, Doorga Sing?" asked the man from Cawnpore ironically.

"We shall learn anon," said the headman gravely.

"You will indeed," was the answer. "But, meanwhile, it is a sign that you should keep yourself prepared, with loins girded up, your spear sharp and your flintlock well oiled. For something great is in the air."

"I heard a saying two days ago," said the other; "it was in the bazaar, and a holy fakir uttered it, and it was something in these words: 'The Kumpani came in 1757. Look for its end in a hundred years.' For a hundred years have the sahibs ruled us and oppressed us."

"Ay, ay," added Shumshoodeen Khan, as he got up from his squatting position and swaggered away, "the Mussulmans have a prophecy:

'Fire worship for a hundred years,
A century of Christ and tears,
Then the True God shall come again
And every infidel be slain.'"

CHAPTER III

THE DEED OF MUNGUL PANDY

WHENEVER the sepoy was troubled in his mind he wanted to see the 'Red Cock flap its wings,' to use the Russian peasants' term—he wanted to set fire to something. A few nights after the report of the classie's words had spread through the immediate district, the public buildings and bungalows about the lines or native cantonment of Barrackpore, a few miles north of Calcutta, went up in flames. General Hearsey, who commanded, knew what this portended, and reported to Headquarters that there was ill-feeling among his men.

A month passed; the white rulers of India, except one or two keen brains among them, believed that things were quiet, that the trouble—whatever it was—had died down. But on February 26 the men of the 19th Native Infantry at Berhampore refused to receive ammunition. Their British commandant, Colonel Mitchell, raved angrily at them, making them by his violence believe that their fears regarding the suspected cartridges were well founded. More by good luck than good management the men did not break out in open mutiny; indeed, they soon seemed

ashamed of their insubordination. It was decided that they would have to be punished, but the necessary measures had to be postponed because the nearest available white regiment was at Rangoon!

Meanwhile, at Barrackpore, not far from Berhampore, the trouble was only hidden. Seeing the sullen looks of his soldiers, General Hearsey, who spoke their language like one of the natives, and knew their natures better than they did themselves, spoke to them on parade, pointing out how foolish it was for them to believe that their cartridges were polluted; he told them that those they were using were what they had always used, and it was not intended that any that were smeared with fat were to be issued to them. He said that no design was intended against their caste or religion, and he laboured, with all the fervour of an officer who loved his men and sorrowed to see them in the grip of unreasoning fears, to persuade them to put off their suspicions. After the mutinous conduct of the 19th at Berhampore he again spoke to his men of the 34th, telling them that the sepoys of the 19th would be punished.

It was Sunday afternoon, the 29th of March, a few days after General Hearsey had made his last speech. As usual, the blinding light and burning heat of the sun had driven all Europeans within doors, there to rest, read, or doze in darkened rooms, with wetted screens hanging in place of doors and windows, whiling the exhausting hours away as the sun burned

slowly across the sky. The officers' bungalows were sunk in silence; on the verandahs sat the *punkah-wallahs*, dozing, but still pulling the strings of the punkahs to cool the sahibs within the darkened rooms. On the sandy waste stretching around the cantonment nothing stirred. Suddenly there was the sound of running steps, and a native officer rushed up to one bungalow, that of Sergeant-Major Hewson. Dashing in upon the non-commissioned officer, he said with gasping voice:

"A soldier, Mungul Pandy, has come out of the lines and is drunk. He is shouting to the others about the cartridges, and is waving his loaded musket."

Hewson, quickly donning his white regimentals, sent the native officer to warn the adjutant, Lieutenant Baugh, and himself hurriedly ran toward the parade-ground. When half-way there Lieutenant Baugh caught up with him. The adjutant, immediately on receiving the news, had jumped on his horse, already saddled in the stable, and galloped to the scene of disorder. A few words passed between the two officers, and Baugh rode on.

Meanwhile, on the parade-ground a frantic figure stalked up and down. It was Mungul Pandy; unknown to history until this moment, the first figure to emerge from the confused hordes of mutinous soldiers soon to overrun two vast provinces of India. He was drunk with *bhang* and had become half demented with mutinous talk, and now strutted and

danced up and down, flourishing his musket and shouting:

"Turn out, you blackguards! The English are upon us! Their cartridges will make us all pariahs and dogs!"

A few yards away stood the soldiers of the guard, tall, fine-looking men in regimentals, high-class Brahmins all of them. They looked gloomily at the strange figure and did nothing to stay him; rather, they took a sullen delight in hearing his words. It crisped their nerves, set a light to desires and impulses smouldering in their minds. Behind them was a dense body of sepoys, some in undress, others with regimentals on, talking excitedly, shouting in reply to the mutineer before them, every moment their spirits strengthening to do some fierce outrage. More and more ran up from the native lines as the news of the words and doings of Mungul Pandy were carried farther and farther. A few more moments and the pent-up emotions would break forth.

"Come out, you sons of dogs! Such will you be if you touch the polluted cartridges!"

So the high, thin voice of Mungul Pandy rang out, in a shrill sing-song like a chant. Suddenly there was the sound of beating hoofs and men's eyes turned toward the road. It was the adjutant. One or two pulled themselves together, and looks passed. Here was the representative of the power of the sahibs coming, while they were on the eve of revolt. What would

happen? Sullen looks met sullen looks, and then men turned suddenly as a shot rang out. The adjutant's horse swerved, stumbled, and fell, animal and man rolling in the dust. Mungul Pandy had fired the first shot against the white men—the first of the myriads that were to be fired in the next few months against the Masters, the Rulers. The officer had not been struck: he struggled away from the horse, seized a pistol from the holster, ran at the mutineer, and when within a few paces of him, fired. It missed the man, and next moment the adjutant and the soldier were engaged in a fierce hand-to-hand encounter. Mungul Pandy drew his tulwar, or native sword, and cut down his officer. Then Hewson, hot and breathless, having run almost a mile in uniform, dashed in and pluckily tried to grapple with the mutineer. But he also was cut down by Mungul Pandy.

Shrill cries of exultation rose from the swaying mass of sepoys behind the men of the quarter-guard. Here was a thing of wonder—two sahibs in the dust, struck down by their fellow-countryman! The great thing had been done—the Masters had been defied, nay, beaten! The twenty men of the guard struck at the fallen officers with the butt ends of their muskets, and their officer made no attempt to prevent them. Mungul Pandy raised his tulwar again to cut at the prostrate officers, but his wrist was seized by the one loyal sepoy—a Mohammedan named Shaikh Paltu—who held Pandy while the two officers rose and got away.

By this time two other British officers had come up. Colonel Wheler—he who preached to the sepoys—shouted to the quarter-guard to seize the mutineer: the guard stood motionless, and their native officer said, "They will not go on." The Colonel, a helpless individual, looked at it all through his gold-rimmed spectacle, muttered and said no more! He felt that, as he stated in his report, it was "useless going on any further in the matter"; therefore, he went and reported the state of affairs to the station brigadier, a man named Grant, who, coming on the ground, only added to the wonder and delight of the sepoys. The guard ignored him also, and at the sight, the arrogance, the excitement and fury of the sepoys rose higher.

But here now rode three men, one of whom, wrathful of look, imperious, iron-nerved, was known to all as one to be feared and loved at the same moment. What would happen now to our bold countryman, Mungul Pandy?

General Hearsey rode forward, taking in the scene with one swift, keen glance under frowning brows—the whole parade-ground filled with armed sepoys swaying between their sense of discipline and the new sense of disloyalty excited by the actions of Mungul Pandy. Here and there were European officers endeavouring to persuade their men to put down their weapons. Mungul Pandy himself had reloaded his piece, and now strutted to and fro with a more assured

and triumphant air. He shouted to the quarter-guard and the crowd of sepoys who were behind them:

"You have incited me to do this. But you won't join me. You blackguards! Come on and help!"

"Why haven't you arrested this mutineer?" asked General Hearsey of the brigadier, sternly.

"The quarter-guard disobey our orders," was the reply.

"We'll see about that!" said Hearsey, and rode toward the guard and the mutineer.

"Have a care!" cried an officer. "His musket is loaded!"

"Confound his musket!" said General Hearsey, riding forward.

Mungul Pandy aimed his piece at the General, who, turning to his son beside him, said:

"If I fall, John, rush in and put him to death somehow."

The General reined up beside the guard, and, aiming a pistol at the head of the *jamadar*, or native lieutenant, he said in low fierce tones:

"Listen: the first man who refuses to march when I give the word is a dead man. Quick march!"

The grim words and the grimmer looks, all expressing the indomitable British will, had their effect. The guard stiffened its ranks and marched forward. But Mungul Pandy also had seen the look on the General's face. He placed the muzzle of the musket

against his own breast, pushed the trigger with his toe, and fell covered with blood.

The mutineer was only wounded: he was taken to the prison hospital; some days later he was tried, and on the 6th of April was hanged, in sight of the regiment. The *jamadar* was sentenced on the 11th, but routine was allowed to defer his execution until the 21st, thus losing the effect of swift and stern retribution. The men of the guard who had struck their officers while on the ground were not punished in any way, because Lord Canning, the Governor of India, feared that "any hasty act of retribution would confirm instead of allaying the evil temper of the army!" How little he knew how to deal with the spirit of mutiny which was spreading like a virulent poison throughout the ranks of the sepoys.

The fact was that the Bengal sepoys had been allowed for some years to lose all sense of discipline; they were petted and pampered, and had now reached an unhealthy state of mind such as only stern repressive measures would cure. The disease was bad, and its cure could only be effected by means of drastic remedies. The native soldiers under Colonel John Jacob, whose book had created such bitter feeling against him, laughed at the idea that any sensible man could object to the cartridges, which were the ostensible cause of the mutinous spirit; but these men were under strict discipline, and between them and their officers existed an affectionate confidence.

The Deed of Mungul Pandy

Another rumour now began to circulate among the bazaars and cantonments of Bengal. This was to the effect that the English were mixing dust ground from the bones of cows among the meal used by the natives to make their daily bread, and that similar dust was being thrown into the wells. The report spread terror and rage among the natives: to them it seemed that none could escape from the treacherous tricks with which the white men hoped to defile them and to make them outcast from their religion.

Excitement and fear ran thrilling through the veins of the native soldiery from Lahore to Calcutta; every native court that thought it had suffered from the rule of the English was a nest of disloyalty; at Delhi, where Bahadur Khan, the last representative of the great Timour, the Mohammedan ruler of ancient India, still kept a poor court, the intriguers saw in the unrest a means of regaining something of the past power and magnificence of the dynasty; and from Bithoor, near Cawnpore, Nana Sahib started on a journey, ostensibly for pleasure, to Cawnpore, Delhi, and Lucknow, during which he sounded many native princes discontented with the rule of the British.

At the time little of this unrest and disloyalty was apparent to the ordinary white officials. To them all things appeared calm and the natives seemed content. Few of them, in their British arrogance and self-satisfaction, had taken the trouble to understand the natives over whom they ruled, few knew

their language, and almost none had studied the native mind. Lord Canning, the Governor-General, thought that all was well, and considered how he should send the white regiment back to Rangoon, which he had sent for two months ago with which to overawe the mutinous native soldiery at Berhampore. Luckily, however, there was no vessel available to transport them across the Bay of Bengal.

Thus in each station or town where white officials and their families dwelled—a little handful of Europeans in a weltering ocean of the alien dark race—life went on as smoothly as if it had been lived in England. Officers and civilians, blind to the signs of the danger on every side, took their rides in the cool of morning, did their business, slept through their siestas, had their dances, dinners, and parties in the evening—love-making, marrying, or speculating as to promotion or the prospects of getting away for a hunting-trip—and not one officer, as far as is known, dreamed that behind the gleaming eyes of the ranks before him, marching and counter-marching on parade every morning, there were only thoughts of murder, rapine, and treachery.

There was one man in high authority who foresaw the tempest that was slowly rising about the British in India. This was Sir Henry Lawrence, who had been appointed Governor of Oudh. Patient, conscientious, almost humble in his way of dealing with those about him, he had yet the indomitable energy

and foresight of the born ruler. He knew the Hindu and the Mohammedan; he spoke to all classes with the air of an equal, and by his even-handed justice and kindliness he had quickly restored order and content in a population which the former white officials had made bitter enemies. For years he had known, and spoken openly, of the corruption which was at the heart of the sepoy army, and he warned his superiors that sooner or later trouble would come from these men. Sir John Lawrence, his brother, gave the same warning, but, respected as both men were by the Government, their prophecies went unheeded.

It was not until five weeks after the execution of Mungul Pandy that the mutinous regiment—the 34th—to which he belonged was punished by being disbanded. This method was no punishment at all: it simply created missionaries of disloyalty, who spread the poison of revolt far and wide.

The day before the 34th was punished the 48th Native Infantry, which was stationed at Lucknow, had also been disbanded, by command of Sir Henry Lawrence. Some public men demanded a more severe punishment for the mutineers, but the Governor-General still quibbled and hesitated. But within the next few days the whole of British officialdom was to be startled out of its self-satisfaction by an event which showed too well that trouble was upon them which threatened the very bases of the white man's rule in India.

CHAPTER IV

FIRST BLOOD

ON the morning of Saturday, the 9th of May, under a sky whose dawn was darkened by storm-clouds, there was a good deal of movement about the cantonments that stretched for a long distance north of the town of Meerut. Along the wide road leading from the town came the carriages of the white folk, each with its sahib or mem-sahib going to see the 'show'—the 'show' being the degradation of eighty-five picked soldiers of the 3rd Native Cavalry, who had refused to take the cartridges issued to them some two weeks before.

Spectators on foot crowded the roadway, the natives talking in low tones, and giving way as a horseman rode through. A bugle rang out and the tramp of armed men sounded on the air—white soldiers, these, a battalion of the 60th Rifles. Then came the rumble of artillery, and the quick beat of the horses' hoofs as the Carabineers swept with a clatter from their quarters to the parade-ground.

There at last was the place to which all were making: a hollow square of men, three sides of which were composed of white soldiers, armed, while on the fourth side stood the unarmed men of the 3rd Native Cavalry,

their dark faces sullen, their white eyes gleaming as they looked upon the forms of their eighty-five companions in the middle of the square, with a rough tumbrel filled with fetters beside them.

Beside the flagstaff stood the portly form of General Hewitt, commanding the station, and the chief officers and civil officials of the place. The General read out the sentence upon the eighty-five culprits, while the white men yawned at the wordiness, and unknown thoughts of helpless rage passed through the minds of the eighty-five and of their comrades in the ranks. At length the long document ended and the droning voice ceased.

Then men approached the group of the eighty-five and stripped the uniform from each of them, while the doomed men gazed helplessly from the dark faces of their compatriots to the set looks of the white soldiers on each side. Then came the worst shame of all. General Hewitt had decided that they should have their fetters fixed upon them in sight of all. A shiver ran through the ranks of the native soldiery when they heard the sharp sound of iron upon iron as the native smiths rivetted the leg-irons upon their comrades, and the hearts of the eighty-five swelled nigh to bursting with grief and rage and shame.

Suddenly a penetrating cry rose from the throat of one of them. It was the cry for 'justice.'

"*Dohai! Dohai! Dohai!*"

The dark ranks glanced hopefully at the General

and the group of officers, but they seemed as if they had heard nothing. The clank of the smiths' hammers went on. The cries increased, sounding like the cries of souls in the last depths of despair.

The twilight of dawn gave way before the sun, which, shooting up over the rim of the world, shone on the rifles, the sabres, and the accoutrements of the white soldiers, and revealed the scene of shame plainly to every eye. In vain the eighty-five cried for justice; the lines of white men seemed like ranked statues.

For several hours this painful spectacle continued, raising doubts in the minds of many of the more thoughtful white men, whether, indeed, the long strain would not prove too much for the native soldiers and force them into open mutiny. It was really more than flesh and blood could bear.

As the fettered mutineers were marched off the ground to prison their long-pent misery burst forth. They cried out with bitter curses upon their colonel, a man noted for his vile temper and harsh rule; they cursed their comrades, who had stood by in silence and had seen their shame without stirring, and they cursed the lines of white faces which looked so stonily upon their dishonour and their suffering.

At last the ordeal was over; the fettered mutineers clanked off to their prison, and the soldiers marched back to their barracks. The lines of the sepoys were unusually quiet throughout the day, and there was an exceptional respectfulness in the manner of the natives

generally. Late in the day a native officer sought the bungalow of one of the English officers, Lieutenant Hugh Gough, and told him that he had heard that the men were resolved to release the eighty-five prisoners, whom they looked upon as martyrs, and that there would be a mutiny on the morrow. The lieutenant went immediately and reported this to Colonel Smyth, who commanded the regiment of the mutineers, but he ridiculed the story. Nor did the lieutenant obtain any greater credence from Brigadier Archdale Wilson, who commanded the station.

All that night mutiny and revenge were muttered in the huts of the sepoys; in the bazaar the very women scorned the native soldiers for leaving their comrades in prison, and told them to go and free them. Mingled with thoughts of revolt were feelings of intense terror: the sepoys believed that the sahibs were planning to disarm them and to throw them all into prison.

Meerut was the last place in India where a mutiny might be expected to break out. There were hundreds of miles of country in Bengal where a red-coat was not to be seen among the myriads of native soldiery, but at Meerut two thousand British soldiers were stationed. There, if anywhere, the Europeans and their wives and families might be considered to be safe from murder and spoliation. But it was not so. It was true that the white soldiers, though not in perfect condition as to training and equipment, would have

been more than a match for the 3000 sepoys in the lines; but they were commanded by an obese and incompetent man, General Hewitt, who ought to have been relegated to the retired list years before. The English soldiers at Meerut, indeed, were like an army of heroes commanded by a fool.

The dawn of the next day found the lines of the native soldiery in their habitual Sunday quietude; things went on in their customary routine, but, as the fierce heat of the Indian sun beat down during the day, sending the Europeans to their darkened rooms and their sofas, it did not have the usual effect of sinking the native soldiery into the torpor of sleep. Instead, there was a strange restlessness among them: men stood in talk for a moment, then dispersed, and aimlessly went in and out of their huts and up and down the narrow ways.

A broad road and a mile or more of waste land separated the lines of the natives from the cantonment of the Europeans, and as the latter were too self-confident to expect any trouble from the inferior race, no European went out of his way to observe that where usually there was silence and repose in these torrid hours, there was now feverish agitation.

At length the fierce rays lengthened and softened, the cooler hours were about to begin, and English men and women prepared for church. The vague terror in the hearts of the sepoys on that day was specially connected with the movements of the regiment of

Rifles, who, 1000 strong, were gathering for church parade. In the excited minds of the sepoys their assembling on this particular Sunday had but one end, and suddenly the cry arose: "The Rifles and Artillery are coming to disarm all the native regiments!"

The cry arose in the town. Sepoys in the streets ran frantically to their lines, seized their weapons, and, together with hordes of townsmen and *budmashes* (hooligans), created confusion and riot. Some hundreds of the 3rd Cavalry dashed off in a gallop to the prison, which was only guarded by a few native soldiers. Wrenching the bars from the cells they released the eighty-five mutineers, together with all the malefactors confined there.

Meanwhile, some of the native infantry fell into line under their officers, half loyal, half filled with the thrilling excitement that now swept through the cooling air. Colonel Finnis, of the 11th, with other English officers, rode toward them, and by means of entreaties, commands, and gestures, held the wavering hearts of the men. They hoped to hear the Rifles and the Artillery come to their aid. But they hoped in vain. Colonel Smyth did not stir after he heard that his own regiment had mutinied; General Hewitt was bewildered and did nothing, and Archdale Wilson showed himself quite incompetent to deal with a crisis of this kind. The men who should have struck hard and at once at the rising mutiny did nothing.

Suddenly a native trooper dashed by the swaying lines of excited men held to loyalty by the presence and voices of their white leaders.

"Quick, brothers, quick!" cried the trooper. "The Rifles are coming to disarm you! Kill! Kill! Kill!"

Instantly the men became a seething mass of rage and terror. Cries of "*Deen! Deen!*" ("For the Faith! For the Faith!") rose from their ranks, while the stern voices of the English officers rang out:

"Steady, men, steady! The man speaks lies!"

But the natives were beyond control. Shots were fired; the horse of Colonel Finnis screamed and plunged, and next moment, riddled with bullets, he himself fell, the first victim of the Great Mutiny.

Instantly the majority of the sepoys became filled with the lust of murder and pillage. The 11th regiment, knowing that now the death of their colonel would be placed to their account, threw in their lot with the 20th, from whose ranks, indeed, had come the shots that slew Colonel Finnis. The 11th would not kill their officers: they hustled them roughly away, telling them to save themselves.

It was now dark, and flames began to break out from all parts of the European quarters. The 3rd Cavalry were the leaders in the orgy of murder and incendiarism which now arose, and, aided by bands of evil characters from the lowest quarters of the town, they broke into houses occupied by

Europeans, murdered the occupants, and set the dwellings on fire.

Some Europeans escaped to where the English regiments lay in their barracks, idle because their chief officer was a man of naught ; and while in streets and houses not a mile away dreadful deeds were being done to men, women, and children, the soldiers who, under capable officers, would have annihilated every sepoy, stood inactive.

Soon, in the midst of the murder and pillage, the cry went round among the sepoys : " Quick, brothers, quick ! The white soldiers are coming ! " Terror seized them, and leaping on their horses or running from the burning houses the troopers and foot soldiers went off in scattered groups. Some cried, " To Delhi ! To Delhi ! " but others wandered off in totally opposite directions. Nevertheless, a large body of the mutineers did join together and set off, still with terror in their hearts, on the broad white road leading south to Delhi. As they pressed on their way in the cool darkness many were the looks they turned backward as they listened for the beat of the avenging hoofs of the white troopers, who would surely follow them !

But no ! General Hewitt would not move a man ; and it was not till the mutineers had left the town that he suffered Archdale Wilson to take the Artillery and some of the Rifles for the purpose of hunting out the plunderers and bad characters who remained looting in the half-gutted houses.

Some gallant officers begged to be allowed to take a squadron of dragoons and a few guns and pursue the mutineers on their road to Delhi. Brigadier Wilson refused this request, saying that it was his duty to provide for the safety of Meerut and he could not spare any soldiers. Lieutenant Möller, of the 11th, pleaded to be allowed to ride alone to warn Delhi of its danger, but even this was refused.

The Brigadier considered that he had done his duty when he had led his men to where the road to Delhi stretched away in the darkness, and allowed them to look down it ! Then he went back to study the Army Regulations, in order to find reasons, to be embodied in his report to Headquarters, why he had allowed three thousand mutineers to escape scot free, while he had over two thousand British soldiers under his command.

CHAPTER V

THE DOOM OF DELHI

ON the morning of Monday, the 11th of May, the sun rose gloriously over the stately city of Delhi. As the dawning light broke over the beautiful minarets and cliffy walls of the splendid palace beside the river, there came the cry of the muezzin from the summit of the tower beside the bulb-like dome of the great mosque, the Jamma Masjid. Faintly came the cry, as from the blue and shining sky:

"*La! il-lah-il-ullaho! La! il-lah-il-ullaho!*" [" There is no god but God!"]

Almost as the cry left the lips of the muezzin, it was answered by a single, dull roar of a gun. It was the time-gun on the Ridge, the line of low hills which, in shape like a crouching tiger, lay just outside the city to the north-west, and whereon stood the cantonments and the lines of the soldiery.

As people awoke and went about their business in the cool hours of the dawn, it seemed that in its peacefulness and routine the day was to be no different from any other days under the rule of the British sahibs. The natives, in family groups, went down for their morning bath in the sacred waters of the Jumna;

the shopkeepers opened their shops, and the crowds of buyers and idlers began to fill the streets. In the quarters of the white men, in the northern half of the city, coachmen brought out horses and carriages, the sweepers and gardeners were busy, and white sahibs and their ladies were mounting their horses to go for their early morning canter while the light was still sweet and soft and the air was fresh and cool. The bank clerks were busy over their ledgers at the windows of the Delhi Bank; the compositors were joking as they took up their composing sticks in the office of the *Delhi Gazette*; and the telegraph clerk, tapping with his instrument, was wondering what had happened: he could get no response from the office at Meerut. Some tree, he supposed, had fallen across the wire and broken it.

The white officers of the regiments on the Ridge held their parade as usual, and, as they looked along the dark faces before them, saw nothing in the eyes of the sepoys that spoke of secret knowledge of things which were to startle their white rulers in the course of an hour.

Thus Delhi lay in the curve of the Jumna, with its streets and houses, its mosques and its palace, looking as it looked on any other morning. In its palace, Bahadur Khan lived with his little court and his wives. The King was old and nervous; he was something of a poet, and was of a quiet disposition. He was the last of the old warlike race of Timour, but he himself was all for peace. He was happy under British rule, for

he enjoyed more wealth under it than ever he had possessed when he was independent. But in the dark rooms and winding corridors of the great and beautiful palace about him were many who craved for wider powers wherewith to satisfy their evil passions. Discontent, pride, and ambition grew rankly in the fetid atmosphere, and only the fear of the heavy hand of the British *raj* kept these plotters from breaking out. But now they believed their time was coming.

The road from Meerut entered the city of Delhi across a bridge of boats by the Calcutta Gate, just below the northern escarpment on which the King's palace was built. While the mutineers of the 3rd Cavalry were still a long way off, the dust from their pounding horses' feet and the flash of their accoutrements had been seen from the city, creating wonder in some minds and satisfaction in those of the sepoys who had heard the rumour that something startling might happen at Meerut. The news of the approaching horsemen was carried to the English magistrate in the city, who guessed that something untoward was happening, and therefore galloped to the Ridge and warned Brigadier Graves, the officer in command there. Another civilian went to Lieutenant Willoughby, the commander of the Great Magazine, and put him upon his guard.

The thud of hoofs across the wooden bridge startled the native guard at the gate, and then, with cries of exultation, the mutineers told in few words what had

happened. Hardly staying their horses, the men of the 3rd Cavalry galloped through the streets, and when they saw, amid the crowd of startled, dark faces, the pale skin of a European, they spurred forward with uplifted tulwar, and next moment the man or woman was a corpse upon the ground. Then, all together, they rushed surging about the gate of the palace.

"The King! the King!" they cried: "Lead us to the King! The Lord hath been on our side. We have slain every infidel in Meerut. Help us to kill in Delhi! Lead us, O King!"

But the King was nervous and hesitated, while his favourite wife, Zeenut Maihl, who hated the British, would have had him open to the mutineers. Meanwhile, the palace rabble, eager to welcome these harbingers of revolt against the white sahibs, opened the gates and in rushed the mutineers.

On a balcony above their heads appeared a British officer. It was Captain Douglas, commandant of the palace guards. His stern voice rang out to the agitated crowd below:

"The King orders you to depart! Leave the palace instantly. In the name of the King, Bahadur-Shah, I command you!"

The voice and the name had their effect: out rushed the crowd again, but only to come back soon, with a greater insolence, all the *budmashes* and evil rabble of the town in their train. Now they found the palace guards ready to join them. Captain Douglas and Mr

Fraser, the magistrate, were on the steps of the palace appealing to the loyalty of the native troops, threatening and beseeching. The crowd, shouting scornfully, advanced up the stairs. Douglas leaped back and, getting through a window, jumped into the palace ditch, hurting himself in the great fall. Some natives carried him into the palace. Fraser reached another part of the palace, and on coming to the courtyard of the Lahore Gate appealed to the mob now pressing into it. As he stood speaking he was cut down and slain. The mob, their appetite whetted by this murder, rushed into the palace, smashed open the door of a room where some English people had taken refuge, and dashing this way and that, slew the collector of revenue, the chaplain, his daughter and a lady friend, and finally the unfortunate Captain Douglas.

After this, massacre ran swiftly hither and thither about the city. South of the palace was a quarter filled with native houses and bungalows, where lived the poorer Europeans and the Eurasians (persons born of native and European parents). Up and down the narrow streets rushed the murderers, dashing into houses and gardens, slaying every white man, woman, and child whom they could find. Some Europeans barred themselves in houses, or fled to the river, but all were slain or taken prisoner. Everywhere rang the shriek of exultation and incitement: "*Deen! Deen! Futteh Mohammed!*" ("For the Faith! For the Faith! Victory to Mohammed!")

Throughout the city, except in the north about the Kashmir Gate and the Great Magazine, the slaughter of the Christians was complete. As European teachers gave lessons in the classes of the Government College, troopers rushed into the quiet rooms, and in a moment the teachers lay bleeding and dead before the rows of scholars. Mr Beresford, manager of the Delhi Bank, escaped with his wife to the roof of their bungalow, and valiantly resisted their would-be murderers for a long time, only to be slain at last. Outside the city, in the telegraph office, stood two young signallers, Brendish and Pilkington, together with Mrs Todd, the wife of their chief, who had been slain an hour or two before in the streets of Delhi. To them came native messengers telling them the meaning of the firing and the noise which they had heard coming from the city. Swiftly young Brendish tapped a message which flashed far north along the wires to Umballa, to Lahore, to Rawal Pindi, and to Peshawar: "We must leave office. All the bungalows are on fire, burning down by the sepoys from Meerut. They came in this morning. We are off." The message saved the Punjab, for it warned the Governor, Sir John Lawrence, and enabled him to throttle mutiny throughout his wide dominion before it had time to break forth. The two signallers, taking their chief's widow with them, left their office, but only just in time to save their lives, for the sepoys rushed into the room shortly after their flight.

Meanwhile, on the Ridge, situated two miles north-west of the city, Brigadier Graves was taking all the precautions he could devise for the rescue of white people in the city. He had sent word to all Europeans to come to the Flagstaff Tower, a battlemented building which stood in the centre of the Ridge. Many came flying with some of their valuables in their carriages with them, others with nothing but the clothes upon their backs. Yet others found death ere the message reached them.

The Brigadier had no white troops under him, but he had perfect confidence in the regiments of sepoys under his command. These were the 38th, the 54th, and 74th Native Infantry, with a battery of sepoy artillery. The white officers took speedy counsel: they must send troops into the city to quell the mutiny and to rescue the white people. They did not doubt for a moment that General Hewitt at Meerut had already sent cavalry and artillery hot upon the heels of the escaping mutineers. They would be here now at any moment. So also thought the men at the Great Magazine, and keen eyes looked now and then up the straight road to Meerut, expecting every moment to see the cloud of dust raised by the eager companies of the avengers.

The nearest entrance to the city from the Ridge was the Kashmir Gate, and thither Colonel Ripley of the 54th marched, leaving some of his regiment to follow with two guns. Inside the gate was an

enclosure called the main-guard, which was always in charge of a company of fifty sepoys. Around the inside of the main-guard was a low verandah, and a sloping causeway, called a ramp, led up on one side to a two-roomed house above the gateway, the quarters of the English officer in charge of the guard. Two gates opened from the main-guard into the city itself.

Just as Colonel Ripley reached the Kashmir Gate, troopers of the mutinous 3rd Cavalry dashed up and barred his way. Captain Wallace, who commanded the sepoys of the main-guard—a detachment of the 38th Native Infantry—ordered his men to fire upon the troopers. They refused, with insolent cries. The Meerut mutineers thereupon fired at the white officers of the 54th, and slew six of them. Then the men of the 54th hacked the body of Colonel Ripley to pieces, and joined the mutineers. Wallace galloped off to hasten up the guns, and when the troopers of the 3rd Cavalry heard these were coming, they rode off into the city with the revolted men of the 54th. After Wallace had seen the guns were near, he dashed off to the Ridge to ask for further help.

When Wallace appealed to the native soldiers on the Ridge to come and help, not one of the 38th responded; but those of the 74th who were present came forward when Major Abbott, their commanding officer, appealed to them, and they asked to be led against the mutineers. With two more guns they were marched down to the main-guard, with the idea

of holding that place against the mutineers, who were still murdering and looting in the city, and for the purpose of over-awing the sepoy guard of the 38th. Thus they stood for two hours or more, while their English officers wondered how long the native soldiers, sullenly whispering beside them, would remain faithful, and how long it would be before the welcome shouts of the relieving force from Meerut would break upon their straining ears. While they waited the white men strove to keep up the spirits of those English ladies who had fled to the main-guard for safety.

On entering the place Major Abbott had collected the bodies of five of the officers who had just been killed, placed them in a cart and covered them with some ladies' dresses, looted from some bungalow, which had been thrown down near by. Then he sent the cart off toward the Ridge. Its conductors forsook it after a time, but it got to the Ridge somehow, and was found a month later, the dresses still covering its ghastly burden, by then reduced to skeletons.

On the Ridge, beside the Flagstaff Tower, Brigadier Graves, through the blinding hot hours of that day, strove to put hope and spirit into the refugees in his charge, while every moment he half-expected that the sepoys left with him would break out in murder and mutiny. Long and anxiously he and his officers waited and watched for signs of the avenging party from Meerut. A young Englishman offered to ride thither to ask reinforcements—had, indeed, set out,

but, passing near the Powder Magazine on his way to the Meerut road, was shot dead by the mutineers. Dr Batson, of the 74th, also set out, disguised as a native, but was attacked, stripped, and robbed by villagers, though he escaped with his life.

In the midst of the terrible heat of the afternoon, the officers and white women in the main-guard sat or stood in what angles of shade they could find, waiting for they knew not what, while the companies of native soldiery stood at ease in their ranks, loyalty breaking down more and more as they heard the roar of the crowd, the rattle of firearms, and the shouts of exultation from the city. Suddenly there came the sound of musketry fired as if by disciplined men. The Europeans straightened up, and for a moment hope gleamed in their wearied faces, and fear looked from the eyes of the mutineers. Surely it was the fire of the English troops from Meerut! Then, with despair they recognized that it came from within the city itself; it was the small garrison of Englishmen defending the magazine.

They could hear the howling of the mob as it surged this way and that about the walls of the arsenal; then came the shattering sound of cannon fired in a confined space, and again the shrieks and shouts of the crowd. Continuously during the dreadful heat of the afternoon the guns roared and the musketry rattled. It seemed as if the firing and fighting would never cease.

Suddenly there was a pause ; then yells of triumph reached the listening white men in the main-guard. Next moment a thunderous explosion shook the earth and deafened all ears ; those looking toward the magazine saw a huge flame dart upward to the sky ; it was followed by the uprush of an immense column of dark, dense smoke which, reaching a high altitude, slowly expanded like a huge mushroom, and so stood for a time almost stationary. Then came thudding to the ground, like a dreadful rain from heaven, the limbs and bodies of besieging sepoys, fragments of masonry and weapons, and a hail of thousands of bullets.

The garrison of nine heroes had blown up the magazine rather than that it should fall into the hands of the mutineers.

The tale of this deed, one of the most heroic of this heroic time, can never be too frequently told : the names of the nine heroes should be part of the everyday knowledge of each British boy and man.

CHAPTER VI

THE GALLANT NINE

THE names of the little garrison of the magazine at Delhi were as follows: Lieutenant George Willoughby in command, Lieutenants Forrest and Raynor; Conductors Buckley, Shaw, and Scully; Sub-conductor Crow, and Sergeants Edwards and Stewart.

The magazine which this group of nine brave men so heroically defended on the 11th May was a big building standing some 600 yards from the Kashmir Gate. In it were kept great stores of munitions of war, and as soon as mutiny and murder broke out in the city, Willoughby took precautions for the defence of the place under his charge. He knew that it would be the object of the mutineers to gain possession of it, seeing that the capture of its cannon, ammunition and rifles would be of vast importance to them. It is said that to chance acquaintances Lieutenant Willoughby seemed to be no more than a shy, refined, boyish-looking subaltern, no different from hundreds of others scattered up and down India. But beneath his quiet exterior he possessed the great heart of all brave men; he was kindred to all the high heroes known and unknown to history since men first learned to die doing their duty.

He could not rely on his native guard; he therefore sent to Brigadier Graves for any white men who could be spared. None came, and Willoughby quietly took his resolution. He could depend on his British comrades, and, most of all, he could depend upon his own stout heart of courage. The magazine was not a place which could be strongly held; it had been condemned by Sir Charles Napier when he was Commander-in-chief; but Willoughby barricaded the gates, and placed ten pieces of artillery to command vārious points.

As he surmised, the crowds of mutineers were soon gathering about the walls of the magazine, and the score of native guards under him were already wavering in their loyalty. He had thrust weapons in their hands, but he knew they would fall away at the first opportunity.

Willoughby and his comrades realized that they could not hope to hold the magazine for long against a horde of determined men who were trained soldiers, and therefore they agreed between themselves that they would fight the mutineers as long as they possibly could, and then, if still that cloud of dust did not rise on the long white road which they could see from the river bastion, they would blow up the place and be blown up with it.

"Sir," said Conductor Scully, when the train of powder had been laid from the magazine to a lemon-bush in the middle of the yard; "I'd be glad if you

would let me hold the port-fire, and I'll set her alight when you give the signal."

It was asked quietly: the request for this post of honour and death, and as gravely the young lieutenant assented.

For some time the enemy seemed to pause; they feared lest the masters, the fierce, white soldiers, should be coming up that road lying out there burning in the sun. Then word went round that the King's scouts had come in and had reported that for miles there were no signs of the sahibs. The infidels in Delhi were forsaken: they had been delivered over to the hands of the faithful. Then came a rattle at the gate. "Open, in the name of the King! Yield up the magazine!"

There was no answer. A little while, and then, like rats scuttling from a sinking ship, the score of native helpers in the magazine shinned up the walls and dropped down among the mutineers. They knew what kind of death was coming if they stayed with those half-gods, half-devils, the nine sahibs. They were full of the fear of the black line of powder, and they fled.

Then came the grind of grapnels, as scaling ladders were hooked on the tops of the walls. The first dark heads that appeared were sniped by the muskets of the nine, as in one volley they began the fight of the few against a thousand.

Next moment, with a roar, the nine cannon spoke, belching death into the masses of mutineers that now

had clambered over an outhouse, and who, by platoons and companies, kneeled and fired by word of command at the indomitable nine who stood there, each serving and firing his gun with almost incredible swiftness.

Thus for three hours the battle raged. Exposed to the fierce fire of musketry, the British steadily worked their guns, dealing death about them, each bleeding from wounds they had themselves received, but never thinking of yielding.

How many times did Willoughby run to the river bastion and look down the shimmering road! But no cloud of dust arose to speak of help coming from those two thousand angry, shameful comrades sitting quietly in their lines, heroes themselves, but commanded by a fool.

No; it was useless to hold on any longer; every moment the mutineers were pressing closer; every moment the survivors of the nine were getting weaker from their wounds. Edwards and Crow were slain, Forrest and Buckley were badly wounded.

"Now, Mr Buckley, if you please," came the quiet voice.

Buckley straightened himself as if about to enter the presence of his colonel; Scully, port-fire in hand by the lemon-bush, saw him raise his hat. Instantly the fire was lowered to the black line, and the flash ran hissing swiftly to the door of the magazine.

A great breathing of horror came from the thickly-packed mutineers who saw the serpent of fire disappear

into the dark of the doorway. Next moment there was a roar, a rush of flame and smoke, a rending as if earth itself was parting asunder, and then death smote large numbers of the crowded besiegers and hundreds of passers-by in the streets.

From this inferno of shattering masonry, bursting shells and hailing bullets seven of the intrepid garrison crawled out alive. Scully was killed by a trooper as he tried to escape after the explosion ; but Lieutenants Willoughby, Forrest, and Raynor, Conductors Buckley and Shaw, and Sergeant Stewart found themselves alive outside the magazine, though scorched and black, and aching from their wounds. Willoughby and Forrest ran to the main-guard and joined the remnant of the Europeans there, the others managed to escape from the city and made what way they could to Meerut. Forrest and Raynor, Buckley, Shaw, and Stewart succeeded in reaching that town alive, and in course of time were each rewarded with the Victoria Cross. Willoughby, their leader, was not so happy : he was slain by marauders as he was painfully making his way to Meerut.

The roar of the explosion of the magazine shook the nerves of the files of soldiers in the main-guard : they became filled with a mad agitation, and the coming of Willoughby and Forrest, blackened like fiends, added to their terror. After some hesitation the men threw off all restraint and began to fire at their officers, three of whom fell dead. The crowded place

became a pandemonium, filled with the echo of shots, the yells of the mutineers, the shrieks of the women, and the fierce shouting of the officers. Through the eddying smoke the remaining Europeans rushed to the sloping way which led to the bastion above. Up they struggled in a mad *sauve qui peut,* the bullets whistling about them, and 'pinging' on the masonry beside them. Some were killed, the others managed to reach the bastion and crowded for refuge into the embrasures, while the sepoys in the main-guard still fired at them.

The men and women looked this way and that for escape; but there was only one avenue, and that was by the steep wall beside them and the sheer drop into the dry ditch twenty-five feet below. The women shuddered as they looked down, but the men, tying belts and handkerchiefs together, made a rough rope, down which the ladies were lowered. The sepoys now trained one of the light guns upon the survivors on the parapet, and sent round shot among them. One stout old lady, fearing to descend, clawed at the parapet and shrieked. A cannon shot smacked against the wall; she released her hold, and the men beside her gave her a heave, and she slithered down into the ditch. Then the remainder of the men hurried down and helped the women to climb the almost perpendicular wall on the farther side of the ditch. Reaching the top they trailed across into the jungle and began their dreadful flight to Meerut.

By this time the fugitives at the Flagstaff Tower had lost all hope of relief from Meerut, and now, having seen the magazine blown up, the sepoy companies beside them told their officers that they had better go. The men of the 38th were still friendly to the brigadier personally, as also were those of the 74th, but when the bugler sounded the assembly, only one loyal man fell in and saluted.

The sun was sinking as Brigadier Graves gave orders for the retreat. The officers and the women and children got into the carriages and went toward the cantonments on the way to Meerut. Bungalows were already burning, but the sepoys offered no obstacle to the flight of their masters, and on arriving at the lines the native soldiers dispersed. Brigadier Graves, Captain Nicholl, and Dr Stewart were the last to leave the Ridge, followed by the one faithful sepoy of the 74th.

The full story of the flight of the fugitives from Delhi would be a piteous and moving narrative. Tramping by day through the scorching jungle, which held the heat like furnace walls, faint with hunger and thirst, sick to death themselves, yet cheering each other with faint hopes, the wretched white people suffered agonies. After a time they broke up into small parties so that they should not excite attention. Some were robbed of their horses by marauders or villagers, and those who never before had ventured out on foot in the terrible heat of the Indian noon now had to stagger along, almost bare of foot and in rags,

and those who before had known and expected nothing but deference and servility from the dark people whom they ruled, now hid away at every sound, and shrank back from every sign of native habitation.

Some were scourged by insolent vagrants, who robbed them of watches, rings, and jewellery, or they were trapped into villages with promises of food and rest, to be slain or maltreated ; some were drowned in morasses or in the waters of rivers which they tried to pass ; others fell dead as they walked, or, giving up, sank down and begged the others to leave them to their fate and to save themselves. Mothers buried their children in holes faintly scratched in the jungle soil, lovers and husbands saw their sweethearts or wives die from fatigue or hunger, or when the men fought to keep their women from capture or maltreatment by natives, many a woman saw him she loved slain before her eyes.

It is said that the Moslem villagers were most treacherous and cruel, and that many of the fugitives experienced real kindness and help from simple Hindu folk. Some got to Meerut after days of agony, others reached Kurnal or Umballa, but the most part found death in the jungle.

There is a tale that one white woman was left alive in Delhi. She was a Mrs Leeson, who, with other Europeans, had taken refuge in a cellar when the sepoys rushed with sword in hand through the streets. The rebels discovered them, and for nearly three days

the white men kept up a desperate defence against their assailants. The brave defenders sank one by one until there remained but one man, a Baptist missionary, "a very tall and powerful man, with a bloodless face, grey eyes, a broad jaw, and a determined mouth. . . . Stripped to the waist, behind the ghastly rampart of the dead, the hero stood; and for hours this Horatius held his own. At last he fell, shot through the heart, and the blood-thirsty devils poured in." All the women and children were killed, as the sepoys believed, but Mrs Leeson, fainting under the stress of horror, had been hidden by the bodies of her dead companions. Recovering consciousness, she had crept out in the dark of the night and wandered through the silent streets, seeing the bodies of white men and women crucified or hanging upon trees, and the mutilated corpses of children lying here and there. By good chance she had met a compassionate native, who befriended her through all the weary months of the siege, until, when the British entered, she revealed herself to an English guard at the gate.

CHAPTER VII

THE ADVANCE UPON DELHI

IT seems probable that there was a conspiracy, put on foot by the scheming brains of those who hated the British *raj*, to bring about the mutiny of the whole Bengal Army on the 31st May. Native witnesses averred on examination when the mutiny was over that emissaries from the ringleaders of the plot went to each regiment and appointed agents to win over the rest of the men. It was further said to be arranged that all the regiments, having risen on the day appointed, were to slay their officers as well as all other white people in or near the station, and seize all treasure and munitions of war.

The impatience of the men of the 3rd Cavalry at Meerut precipitated the rising, which, instead of taking place in one stupendous and possibly paralysing movement, broke out piecemeal. By this accident the firmer spirits among the English were sometimes able to parry the blow aimed at the lives in their care, even if for the time authority was wholly swept away.

The first act of the mutineers, after they had got possession of Delhi, was to thrust upon the old and self-indulgent Bahadur Khan the title of Mogul, borne by his illustrious and magnanimous ancestor,

Akbar the Great, and the native soldiery of India were called upon to rise for the restoration of the ancient Empire of the Moguls. This cry did not carry weight with the Hindu troops, who were descendants of the Mahratta princes who had contested for long years with the Moslem invaders. This, however, mattered little, for what a political cry failed to bring about, the lust of rapine and murder and the desire for mastery availed, in the course of a few weeks, to make a mutineer of almost every native soldier whether Hindu or Mohammedan.

As has been stated, the sepoys at Delhi had seized several Europeans and Eurasians and had thrown them into prison. There were fifty persons, and for five days they suffered torment in a small apartment, with only one door and no windows, beneath the rose-red walls of the palace of the King. Then they were remembered and were herded out, men, women, and children, and, tied with one huge rope, were dragged beside a cistern under some trees in the garden. Ragged or half-naked, famished, weak, and haggard, they shrank away from the fierce dark faces about them. A native prince, Abul Bukr, dressed in rich clothes, and drunk with *bhang*, gave the signal: the sepoys threw themselves upon their defenceless victims, and in a few moments the poor creatures lay in a shambles. One woman, a Mrs Aldwell, saved the lives of herself and her three children by promising to become a Mohammedan. The bodies of the others were

placed in a cart and thrown into the waters of the Jumna.

General Anson, Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army, was at Simla in poor health when the news reached him of the rising at Meerut and Delhi and the capture of the latter stronghold. The next few days were days of feverish activity. Messages by messengers and by telegraph were speeding to and fro, both between stations in the Punjab and between the Governor-General and his officers at the chief stations—Agra, Allahabad, Benares, Lucknow, Simla, and Rawal Pindi.

A siege train, consisting of big guns suitable for the breaking down of the walls of Delhi, was ordered to be prepared. But difficulties as to transport intervened: few natives could be found with cattle and carts, and the officers entrusted with the assembling of food stores, ammunition, and other necessaries, one and all declared that the tasks set them by the Commander-in-Chief were impossible to be executed.

Meanwhile both Lord Canning from Calcutta and Sir John Lawrence in the Punjab were urging General Anson to make a swift and vigorous attack upon Delhi, for they saw that while the white masters were inactive and the mutineers were left undisturbed and unpunished, disloyalty was growing in the lines of every regiment from the Hooghly to the Indus. Anson determined to do this, and decided to order the English forces at Meerut to meet him on the road. For this

purpose it was necessary to communicate with General Hewitt by messenger, but it was feared that the road from Kurnal to Meerut was held by the mutineers. He wanted as a messenger some one of courage and resource, and such a man came forward in the person of William Hodson, who was afterward to gain a doubtful fame from his daring and unscrupulous exploits throughout the Mutiny. He was a lieutenant of the East India Company's 1st Fusiliers, and offered his services as messenger. He rode a hundred and fifty-two miles in seventy-two hours through a region swarming with mutineers. Having delivered his message at Meerut, he returned to Kurnal, and four hours later was back again in his quarters at Umballa, fifty miles farther north.

With the information thus obtained from General Hewitt as to the forces at his command, General Anson completed his plan of attack on Delhi, and set out on the 25th May with the last detachment. Almost immediately he was struck down with cholera, and two days later he lay dead at Kurnal.

The command now fell to General Sir Henry Barnard, who pushed on with all haste to join with the forces from Meerut under the command of Brigadier Wilson. The latter was met by mutineers from Delhi, and after severe fighting the men of Meerut put the rebels to flight, thus showing that they were of excellent metal, and that their inglorious impotence at Meerut had been through no fault of their own.

The Advance upon Delhi

A few days later the forces of Barnard joined those of Wilson, and together they administered a thorough defeat to an army of the mutineers who stood in their way at Nujufgarh, five miles out of Delhi. At this battle was first shown the passion with which the British soldiers were determined to fight the murderers of women and children. Even the wounded lying on their beds of pain begged to be allowed to get up and help punish the ' Pandies,' as they termed the sepoys, calling them after the name of Mungul Pandy, who, in popular estimation, had started the storm of mutiny and murder that was now rising.

The battle was sternly fought by the mutineers, who displayed the greatest courage, worked their guns with precision, and, being attacked in force, fought bravely beside the cannon, asking for no quarter. It was a struggle which tested the fighting powers of the British to the utmost, for the ground was difficult, the enemy stubborn, and the afternoon sun seemed to blaze down a fiercer heat as if in aid of the mutineers. Step by step the sepoys were forced back until they took up a final position on the Ridge. Here they launched a galling fire upon the forces of the British, but the enemy was at length compelled to fly, whereupon the exhausted troops lay down to rest and take food.

The action was a decisive one: a smaller white force had defeated a larger sepoy army, and had driven them from a commanding position and

compelled them to seek shelter within the walls of the city.

From the ramparts the people of Delhi saw the figures of the British soldiers standing on the shoulder of the Ridge, and no doubt wondered what so small a body of men could do against so great, so powerful a city. Some probably scorned them: every Christian, every white man had been slain that was found within its precincts, the power of the sahibs had been crushed indeed if, a month after the slaying, those who had once been masters of the Moslem and the Hindu could do no more than send that trickle of men against the overwhelming troops of the King of Delhi.

Through the golden air of that afternoon the Englishmen looked down from the Ridge upon the beautiful city before them. The gleaming waters of the Jumna bordered it to the east, and its great walls surrounded the town completely, their outline broken at intervals by gates and bastions peeping through clumps of trees. Midway between the houses was a straight line of waving trees, beneath whose shade ran the broad 'Regent Street' of the city, the *Chandni Chowk*. To the left, high above the level of houses, soared the pink walls of the palace of the King of Delhi, its towers and minarets piercing the blue of the Indian sky. Not far from it, rising like a great bubble of pearly white, towered the swelling dome and tall minarets of the Jamma Masjid; and, farther still

to the south, amid the ruins of a still older Delhi, rose the gigantic mosque, the Tomb of the Emperor Humayun.

Looking on the city, the scene of so much agony of mind and body of many of their compatriots four weeks before, the British soldiers grimly thought that in a day or two they would be wreaking a complete vengeance on the sepoys in the guilty city, for no one doubted that it would be an easy thing to seize the place and slay the sepoys it held. Such, indeed, was the opinion of every one without exception; they believed that the mutineers in Delhi were like rats in a trap. They did not realize that the English army was to be fought by the discipline and spirit which the Government itself had planted in the natures of the sepoys, and that many weary weeks of desperate waiting and fighting were to pass before the blood of their slaughtered countrymen was to be avenged.

CHAPTER VIII

THE MUTINY SPREADS

THE effect of the outbreak at Meerut was like that caused by a breach made in the dyke walls which keep back the sea: the water pours through one aperture, and, by its own force, widens the opening, breaks down other nearer parts of the wall, which, sapped also from within, begins to crumble until whole sections of it fall, and the waves begin to dash over the whole.

Only a few days elapsed before the effects of the mutiny at Meerut and Delhi began to show themselves throughout the length and breadth of the districts nearest to those towns. The headquarters of the North-West Provinces was Agra, situated on the Jumna, at a distance of 139 miles from Delhi. The city commanded the road to Calcutta from the west, and was therefore an important station. It was imperative that its great fort, which dominated the town and the district, should not be allowed to fall. The garrison consisted of a white regiment, the 3rd Bengal Fusiliers, a troop of European artillery, with two regiments of native infantry. The sepoys, who were on the verge of revolt, caused fires to break out in the native lines nightly. The British

had withdrawn to the fort after some vacillation on the part of those in command, and it was the aim of the sepoys to lure the troops out of the fort to subdue the fires, when advantage would be taken to seize the stronghold. But Colvin and Drummond, the officials in command, were too wary, and the plot of the sepoys came to nothing. It became necessary to send some of the native troops to escort some of the Company's money from the treasury at Muttra, thirty miles away. It was thought that they would be loyal enough for this task, but when they had the treasure in their possession they made off with it to Delhi. On this reaching the ears of the officials at Agra the remaining sepoys were paraded and disarmed, after which the white inhabitants could feel that they were safe.

At other stations in the North-West Provinces, however, mutiny broke out with all the distressing accessories of murder and outrage. Stationed at various towns on the trunk road between Agra and Delhi were companies of the 9th Native Infantry. The reports from Meerut and Delhi startled and shocked the English officers, but they still believed their own men were sound. Indeed, the men themselves seemed to wish to be loyal, for when some of the mutinous 3rd Cavalry, on a plunder raid from Delhi, came about them, they beat them off. On the 20th May a mutinous agent, or spy, was discovered by the sepoys themselves at Allyghur, and they gave him up to their white officers, who, after trial, hanged him in the presence

of their men. Then murmurs arose; some pointed out that the malefactor was a high-class Brahmin; and one, suddenly standing before the corpse slowly twisting on the rope, cried out, "Behold a martyr to our religion!"

Instantly the sepoys were thrown into excitement; they seized their weapons, plundered the bungalows and released the convicts. They did not touch their officers, however; in fact, the 9th Native Infantry was almost the only regiment that did not do murder. They gave each of the officers three months' pay from the treasury, and escorted them and their families to within a safe distance of Agra. Then they marched to Delhi, and the dead bodies of men bearing the regimental number of the Ninth Regiment were found in the front line of every severe engagement round that city. They formed the most daring and determined opponents of the British; but in consideration of their merciful dealing with their officers, all of them who survived the Mutiny were pardoned by the Government.

When the companies of the 9th mutinied at Mynporee, the only officer there was Lieutenant de Kantzow. In the midst of the delirious frenzy which possessed the sepoys, the young fellow attempted single-handed to check the men. They dragged him with them, and as they went along, fiercely shouting, they fired at the houses of civilian Europeans and plundered the magazine of its ammunition. Muskets

were pointed at the young lieutenant time after time, but he folded his arms and bade them fire, and the weapons were lowered. When the men reached the treasury they were met by the guard, who would have fired on them but for de Kantzow's order forbidding them. Then the gaol-guards attacked the sepoys, and de Kantzow's position became critical in the extreme. Incensed by the attack made upon them, some of the mutineers threatened to stab him, but he stood firm and undaunted, imploring the sepoys to consider the madness and wickedness of their disloyalty. The sepoy, like the Highlander, worshipped a man who showed a high courage, and though the surging crowd of murderous-minded sepoys hated him for his colour, they admired and respected him for his unconquerable heart. At length, after he had been with them for three hours, trying in vain to stem the tide of furious mutiny, a native gentleman of great influence among the sepoys intervened and drew him out of the crowd. The raging multitude turned away and went to swell the bands of mutinous sepoys marching from all sides toward Delhi. De Kantzow received the thanks of the Governor-General for his conduct. "Young in years," ran the letter, "and at the outset of your career, you have given to your brother soldiers a noble example of courage, patience, good judgment, and temper, from which many might profit."

Mutinous outbreaks now took place daily, some-

times without the murder of white people, but more often with all the outrages which blood-lust inspired. The mutineers had almost unfettered control once they had broken from their loyalty, for they were legion, while white troops were few. A few figures will give an idea of the wide extent of country over which mutiny was now raging, and of the wholly insufficient forces at the command of the authorities with which to stamp it out. The provinces affected by the Mutiny covered an area as large as a quarter of Europe; their native population was 94,000,000, and the number of European troops, located in stations here and there over this immense territory, hardly exceeded 20,000 men. It has been stated that "the sepoy army in Bengal numbered 150,000 men, and within six weeks of the shot which killed Colonel Finnis at Meerut, of its 120 regiments of horse and foot, only twenty-five remained under the British flag, and not five of these could be depended upon." Ultimately the forces with which, after almost superhuman efforts, the British were able to beat down the mutiny were European troops, with a few regiments recruited from the Sikhs and the wild tribesmen of the hills, both of whom were hereditary enemies of the Bengalese.

The description of what was experienced at Nusseerabad, fifteen miles south-west of Ajmere, in Rajpootana, is one which could be duplicated as referring equally to a hundred stations during the months of May, June, and July 1857. The native



His Life for the Flag : An Incident [illegible] Mutiny

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infantry at this place revolted, and, after a struggle, mastered the guns. Many of the Europeans were murdered, and one who escaped, Lieutenant Prichard, has left on record a vivid account of the suspense and anxiety which Europeans suffered during these weeks.

"I think," he wrote, "all who have passed through the eventful period of 1857 will agree with me that the most distressing time of all was the interval—short in some cases, long in others—which elapsed before the troops actually declared their mutinous intentions. To trust them really was impossible; at the same time we could not actually distrust them. . . . Those who had families to protect, wives and children, whose fate might be so dreadful that the stoutest heart feared to contemplate it, and the bare possibility of which was enough to unman any one, experienced this anxiety to the utmost. But there we were, day after day, looking out eagerly for reports, discussing among ourselves anxiously the signs of the times, and the feeling of our men, and the prospect of their remaining faithful, with the chance of escape, or the first mode of action to be adopted if they mutinied. From the first thing in the morning to the last thing at night, we were kept with our mental energies strained to the very utmost, striving to maintain a careless, unconcerned demeanour, lest we should encourage disaffection by showing want of confidence. . . . Expecting to hear from the lines

every moment the sound of uproar that would herald in, we knew, a scene of outrage and massacre, we looked at our wives and little ones, and felt how powerless we were to save and protect those whom God had given us for protection from a lawless and blood-thirsty rabble, drunk with lust and fury."

The outbreak at Bareilly, in the north of the North-West Provinces, was one which made a deep impression at the time. The troops stationed there were the 18th and 68th Bengal Native Infantry. On hearing of the mutinies at Meerut and Delhi, the officers transferred all the women and children to a station in the hills. For a time the sepoys were quiet, but at the news that a king was proclaimed at Delhi, the lines hummed with fierce excitement, which was increased when mutineers from another station entered the place. Days passed and the excitement of the sepoys died down; some approached their officers and spoke of the evil advice which had been given to them, and asserted that they had refused to be misled, and expressed contrition at ever having appeared to give ear to the counsel of the mutineers. Others regretted that their officers seemed to have so little reliance upon them as to think it necessary still to keep the ladies and children in a place of safety, and begged that these should be brought back. Some of the officers believed them; others, however, persisted in doubting their professions. The officer in command, Brigadier Sibbald, was so moved by their evident

remorse that he wrote to Headquarters relating their contrite loyalty and praising their fine qualities.

Suddenly, on Sunday the 31st of May, when the British quarters were sunk in slumber at eleven o'clock at night, a fierce roar rose from the native lines, shots were fired, and, hurrying from the dark, quiet rooms of their bungalows, the officers found that what the keener wits among them had foreseen had come to pass. Quickly the work of devastation, slaughter, and outrage was in full swing; the confiding Brigadier was one of the first victims to fall, and soon, to the accompaniment of burning bungalows, plundering by released convicts, and indiscriminate shooting by the mutineers, the doomed Europeans were murdered or taken prisoners.

A native officer of artillery, Bakht Khan, assumed the leadership, and paraded the town in the carriage of the murdered Brigadier, surrounded by a staff. Many of the Europeans escaped as by sheer miracles; three of the officers having to gallop along the length of the parade exposed to the fire of the rebels at 200 yards. A native judge, named Khan Bahadur Khan, the descendant and heir of the last chief of the Rohillas, assumed the title of Viceroy of Rohilcund, and ordered the captives to be brought forward and tried. The prisoners included two Civil Servants named Robertson and Raikes, and Doctors Hay and Bach, principals of the college at Bareilly. They were tried by a mock court, and hanged in front of the gaol.

One of the few white men who traitorously fought in the ranks of the sepoys during the Mutiny is believed to have taken part in the outbreak at Bareilly. His name is unknown, but mutineers who had fought under him stated that he was serving with one of the native regiments when they mutinied. He was sergeant-major, and, as they allege, to prove his loyalty to the rebel cause he shot his superior officer, Adjutant Tucker, during the outbreak in the lines of the sepoys. Another white man also unknown, was said to have been killed in the ranks of the rebels in one of the battles fought when the mutineers from Delhi tried to resist the advance of the siege train under Sir Henry Barnard.

CHAPTER IX

THE REVOLT AT JHANSI AND ALLAHABAD

IT must not be supposed that every prince or chieftain under the rule of the British joined in the mutiny. There were some exceptions, where, in spite of fierce urging from their own relations, or incitement due to their own feelings of animosity against the British rule, some chieftains remained steadfast.

Mention has already been made of the discontent caused to many native rulers and landowners by means of the system of land revenue brought into use by Mr Thomason. Under this method, large landowners were rendered discontented when their lands were divided among their tenants, the former owner simply receiving a percentage from the rents. One has only to imagine the shame caused by this procedure in the minds of many old and proud families, who, for generations had been looked upon by their tenants very much as a Highland chieftain was regarded by his clansmen, or an English squire by the numerous tenants of his broad acres.

One such chief was the Rajah of Dilheri, the feudal lord of the Gonds, whose territory was situated some 240 miles south-west of Allahabad. He had always

been faithful to the British *raj*, and, indeed, as a certificate of such loyalty he had been presented by the Government with a gold medal, which he greatly prized. The officer who represented the British Government at his court was a Captain Ternan, a man who looked on the Thomasonian system with great disfavour, and who strove his utmost to soften its harshest provisions. Orders came at last to the British agent to instruct the Rajah that his property would be divided among his tenants and that his title was to be taken from him.

With great reluctance Captain Ternan announced this order to the Rajah. The old man, drawing from his girdle the medal which the Government had bestowed upon him, handed it to the officer, and with burning words of reproach and anger told him to give it back to those who were now about to dishonour him in the eyes of his clan. Ternan strove to pacify the old chieftain, but the wound to the latter's feelings was very deep. The English officer endeavoured to obtain gentler treatment for him from the central Government, the authorities of which censured him for his persistent advocacy. The Rajah recognized the efforts which the British official was making in his behalf, and showed his gratitude in many ways.

Then came the anxious days of the mutiny. Petty chiefs, who had been injured and dishonoured by the same means as had incensed the Rajah of Dilheri, were throwing off their allegiance and inciting their

tribesmen to revolt, to loot, and to murder. The Thomasonian system caused men to rebel everywhere throughout the wide districts where its harshness had dispossessed old families and made men's minds sore. Every one believed that the Rajah of Dilheri would rebel against the Government that had stripped him of his title and his lands, and Captain Ternan, though he refused to leave his house, expected every day to hear of the Rajah's defection.

Early one morning, hearing the noise of arms outside the house, Captain Ternan came out and found that it was surrounded by a considerable body of matchlock men (men armed with the old-fashioned matchlock gun). A glance showed him that they were Dilheri tribesmen. He sent for the Rajah, and asked him the reason of these armed men about the house.

"They are to protect you, sahib," was the instant reply. "You have behaved kindly to us, and fought our battle when the title and the estate were confiscated, and you were abused for so doing. Now we hear many evil men round about have risen against the British *raj*, and we come to offer you our services. We will stand by you, as you stood by us. What orders have you for us, sahib ?"

"I thank you, Rajah," was the reply ; "and as for orders, do you keep the district clear of all plunderers and mutineers."

The Rajah promised that this should be done ; his large clan remained loyal throughout the mutiny,

and while the waves of outrage, murder, and revolt were surging all around them, the district of Narsinghpur remained quiet and orderly.

Far different was the outcome of the British policy in the district of Jhansi, only some 130 miles north of Narsinghpur. This territory had belonged to a rajah who, dying in 1854, left no direct representative of the family. Only his widow remained, a young woman of strong passions and ambitions. She protested that the district ought to be given to her; but in spite of her claims the Government declared that the state must thenceforth be controlled by the East India Company. The pension which was offered to her she vehemently rejected.

The insult and outrage which the Ranee considered had thus been inflicted upon her she never forgave. She nursed her revenge in secret, until, when she heard of the outbreaks at Meerut and Delhi, she knew that the time for vengeance had come. Instantly she and her councillors began to tamper with the loyalty of the troops stationed in the district. These comprised companies of the 12th Bengal Native Infantry and of the 14th Irregular Infantry.

For some days the Ranee kept her plans secret. The Europeans, fearing revolt, determined, should need arise, to make a stand in the military fort, and began to provision it. While doing so they were surprised by a force of sepoys, who entered the place and said that they were going to hold it. The residents were

nonplussed. The officers held a parade, however, and the sepoys swore to stand loyal to the service. Ultimately, however, the Europeans determined to throw themselves into the town fort, and their doing so was the signal for the revolt of the soldiery. Cavalry rushed about seeking white people. They met and slew two officers, and then, perceiving their commanding officer making for the fort, they pursued him. He was well mounted, however, and managed to reach the gate in spite of his wounds. The defenders on the ramparts poured a volley into the mutineers, five or six of whom were killed.

Then began a siege, desperate in the extreme. The Europeans numbered fifty-five, including men, women, and little ones, and a large number of natives were with them. For four days the garrison defended themselves against the attacks of the hordes which beset them. For four days and nights they beat off their assailants, the women helping by casting bullets, attending to the wounded, and cooking their provisions. Then, one day, Lieutenant Powys found two sepoys, brothers, just on the point of opening the gates to the mutineers. Powys instantly shot one dead, but next moment was himself cut down by the brother. Captain Burgess, dashing up, avenged the death of his comrade ; but knowing how superior were the numbers of the natives inside the fort he felt it was only a question of time before treachery might have its way.

Provisions began to fail them. Some of their

number who attempted to escape over the battlements of the fort were caught by the rebels and killed. Then the Ranee sent elephants, that were pushed up against the gates, which at length were forced. The garrison fled to some buildings, from which they poured volley after volley into the crowd of blood-thirsty wretches swarming into the fort. The men were determined to protect their dear ones to the last cartridge.

The Ranee, at this point, sent a messenger to say that if they would yield up the fort their lives would be spared, and they would be sent safely to another station. There was an anxious discussion among the Europeans, and haggard faces looked into the gaunt, pathetic eyes of women and children. Their provisions were at an end, and they could not hope to hold out much longer.

They made a counter-proposal to the Ranee: would she and all the sepoys swear to the terms she had offered? Yes; they would all swear, and with their hands raised, the cavalry troopers, the infantry, and the gunners swore that the *sahib-log* should go free and uninjured.

Then they came out: two by two they advanced, the men at the front and rear, the women and children in the middle. Harsh looks met them as they laid their weapons down. The last white man left the fort, and the gates were shut behind them. Then, at a word of command, the sepoys dashed among them, seized the women and children and drew them aside,

and pushed the men into another group. The stern reproaches and the scornful words of the white officers were unheeded; the men were tied together—the cowardly sepoys feared even then to let the white men have their hands free, and the women were roped with the children in a line before their husbands, friends, and fellow Christians.

Then was committed a deed of treachery and cruelty such that, when the white soldiers under Neill, Havelock, and Barnard heard it told, their hands clenched, their eyes glittered, and every brave heart registered a vow to avenge the blood of these innocent people slain so fiendishly. First the men were decapitated before the horrified eyes of the women, then the children were seized and cut in halves before their swooning mothers, and last of all the women themselves suffered the death that to their agonizing minds must have been a happy release indeed.

The outbreak of mutiny at Allahabad was characteristic of what happened in many stations. The fort was an important place of strength. It is situated on a tongue of land formed by the junction of the Ganges and the Jumna, and holds a commanding position on the road to Calcutta from the west. It is 120 miles from Cawnpore, 77 from Benares, and 564 by rail from the capital. Its population of 75,000 was renowned for its fanaticism, and at this time it was garrisoned by an entirely native force, consisting of the 6th Regiment of Native Infantry and a battery of

native artillery. The magazine guard alone consisted of white soldiers. The bulk of the troops occupied cantonments situated some two and a half miles from the fort. These soldiers, on the 9th May, had been joined by a wing of a Sikh regiment, and on the 19th a squadron of the native 3rd Oudh Irregular Horse was added.

Between the officers and sepoys of the 6th Native Infantry there appeared to be the greatest confidence and kindliness. This was the case with many regiments throughout Bengal. The officers had never despised their occupation, as so many had done, and, instead of seeking to get better paid posts in staff duties, they had kept with their regiments and taken a pride and an interest in the welfare of their men. Thus it was that when the poison of disloyalty was infecting regiments far and wide, after that fateful 11th of May, many an officer, placing implicit confidence in his men, had declared that, though other sepoy regiments had proved traitors, *his* native soldiers were true as steel.

Too often that proud trust had been shamefully betrayed, but many old officers still persisted in their blind reliance on their dusky troops. It was so with Colonel Simpson and his subordinate officers who commanded the 6th Native Infantry at Allahabad. Colonel Malleson, who has written a history of the Mutiny, had shortly before this period been serving at Allahabad, and stated that in no other regiment had he noticed such complete sympathy as existed in it between

officers and men. "To make their men comfortable," he relates, "to see that all their wants were attended to, had been the one thought of those officers. I am bound to add," he concludes, "that the men, by their behaviour, seemed to reciprocate the kindly feelings of their superiors."

So much the more impossible was it then for these old officers to believe that their men could be anything but staunch and loyal. When, on the 22nd May, the civil and military officers met to discuss measures for the safety of the station, Colonel Simpson proposed that the whole of his regiment should be placed in the fort to hold it. The magistrate, Mr Court, energetically opposed this suggestion, and it was rejected. In a day or two sixty-five invalid soldiers arrived from Chanar, some seventy-five miles distant, and these, with the non-combatants of the station, were at once moved into the fort.

The fall of this fort would have been disastrous for the British, seeing that it was one of the largest arsenals in India, containing arms for 40,000 men and great stores of artillery.

Near the end of May the sepoy soldiers made a proposal which almost overwhelmed their Colonel with gratification and delight. They stated that they had heard of the wicked conduct of the mutineers of Meerut and Delhi, and they formally volunteered to march against the rebels in the latter city. The delighted Colonel telegraphed the offer to Calcutta;

Lord Canning and his councillors thereupon called public attention to the loyalty of many sepoy regiments, and returned a reply requesting Colonel Simpson to thank the loyal soldiers on behalf of the Government.

Accordingly, on the morning of the 6th of June, the Colonel held a parade. He read the formal thanks of Lord Canning, and then, on his own behalf, added words of glowing praise, in the language of the troops, saying that the fame of their loyalty would resound throughout India. The sepoys set up a great cheer of delight, and seemed to be in the best of spirits.

That evening at the regimental mess all was jollity and satisfaction. The Colonel was in great good humour, for had not his 'children,' his sepoy lads, been thanked for showing so great an example to all their brethren throughout Bengal? Among the guests at the table were eight young ensigns, just fresh from England, almost boys in age, full of nonsense, jokes, and laughter, looking forward with delight to the strange experiences and the jolly sport they would have in the intervals of military duties.

Suddenly talk and laughter ceased: a quick bugle note had rung out in the direction of the native lines outside. Officers looked at each other: on some faces was blank surprise, on others a suspicion of the truth. Then all rushed forth. Horses were swiftly brought round, and the officers rode toward the lines,

whence already they could hear the great murmur of a crowd.

Arrived at the cantonments the officers were received with a murderous fire from the yelling horde of sepoys, who, at the sound of the bugle, had thrown off their treacherous mask and revealed themselves as mutineers. Those who fell dead included Captain Plunkett, who had that very morning expressed his admiration of their loyalty, Lieutenants Steward and Hawes, and Ensigns Pringle and Munro. The Fort Adjutant, Major Birch, was also killed, and Lieutenant Innes of the Engineers; and the eight young ensigns, who a few moments before were laughing and jesting, fell into the hands of the rebels and seven were slaughtered out of hand. The eighth, a lad of sixteen named Arthur Cheek, was left on the ground for dead, but, in spite of terrible wounds, he recovered, crawled away and hid in a ravine. He was discovered and thrust into a hut, to find himself in company with a native convert, who was being tortured to make him renounce his Christianity. The native was losing heart, but Cheek urged him: "Don't deny Christ! Never deny Christ!" Colonel Neill reached Allahabad on his errand of rescue and revenge in time to save both Cheek and the native convert, but the Ensign died of his wounds four days later.

When the officers rushed out of the mess-room two of the cavalry officers, Lieutenant Harward and Alexander, rode for the guns. They collected a few

of their men, and on reaching the bridge where the battery was placed they found the sepoys had turned the guns round upon their approaching officers. The latter gave the order to charge, but their treacherous men, with the exception of three, stopped dead. Harward and Alexander rode at the guns: the former had to ride for his life, but the latter, rising in his stirrups for a blow at an artilleryman, was shot through the heart. The sepoys then dragged the guns into their lines, and the Oudh Irregulars fraternized with the rebel mutineers.

Colonel Simpson, having ridden to the lines, was beginning to address his men, telling them of the pain which their conduct caused him, when he was forced to desist by reason of a murderous volley which emptied several saddles beside him. He turned and fled for the fort, passing the mess-house which he had left only a few moments before. There the mess guard turned out and shot at him. He reached the fort wounded, with his horse dying.

While these events were passing, those in the fort, hearing the sound of firing, were filled with anxiety as to what was happening. Suddenly an officer, half-naked and dripping from a swim in the Jumna, called out for admission from the river gate, and on being let in related what had occurred. By that time other officers had ridden into the fort, and the garrison looked to their own safety.

At the first view it seemed doubtful indeed whether

the fort was a sure refuge for them. The troops inside the fort were composed of the sixty-five white invalids, the youngest of whom was over fifty, a company of the 6th Native Infantry, whose brothers were then murdering every European or Eurasian they could lay hands upon in the European quarter, and the wing of the Sikh regiment. The native infantry within the fort would break out at the first opportunity, while the temper of the Sikhs was doubtful.

As it happened, however, there was in the fort a man of fearless bravery and reckless daring—such a man, indeed, as had been lacking at many places in those terrible days when courage and decision would have saved many lives. This was Lieutenant Brasyer, who had been promoted from the ranks for his coolness and daring during the Sutlej campaign of 1846. He was a splendid swordsman and a fine athlete, and he was greatly admired by his Sikhs. His soldier's instinct knew at once what was necessary to bring his men, trembling on the brink of revolt, to a sense of their duty and interest.

He called up his Sikhs, who sullenly responded, and then, standing before the open magazine door with a red-hot iron in his hand, he cried:

"My lads, you are not smart enough. Fall in and obey orders, or by every *Gooroo* whom you and your fathers have worshipped I will blow you to Hades! Fall in!"

He backed his words with a swift gesture of his hand as if to throw the glowing bar into the black mass of powder. The Sikhs did not hesitate. They looked at their white-haired leader, his beard sweeping his bosom, and in his imperious look and his reckless gesture they knew him for their master.

"Now then," he cried, "load your muskets! Right about face—march!"

Quickly he took them down toward the gate, where the guard of the 6th Native Infantry stood waiting for the supreme moment when they should begin the massacre of the garrison. Then, with the sixty-five invalid soldiers at the guns on the rampart, and on his flank the hastily armed Europeans and Eurasians, Brasyer called on the guard. "Pile arms!" he cried.

At the harsh command the sepoys looked menacingly at Brasyer. Their eyes quickly took in the lines of Sikhs with guns at the ready, and the cannon pointing at them from the ramparts. There was but a moment of hesitation: then, sullenly and unwillingly, the mutineers piled their weapons in a heap. The muskets having been secured, the gate was opened and the sepoys ordered to get out.

Thus the fort was secured; but the town was in the murderous possession of the mutineers, who ran riot, slaying with torture every white man, woman, and child whom they could find, and destroying every sign of European power. The shops of the white

people were gutted, the railway works destroyed, and the telegraph wires torn down. When the treasury had been broken into, and all their lust of murder and pillage satisfied, the rebels, breaking up into two and threes, made their way with their loot to their native villages.

CHAPTER X

HOW THE PUNJAB WAS SAVED

THE few words which, as we have seen, the young telegraph operator, Brendish, hastily sent over the wires to the north from his office at Delhi were words which saved the Punjab from being overwhelmed.

The Punjab was a province that had only been conquered eight years before. Its native Sikhs were good fighting men, and never in India had the British met a foe so determined, so brave, and so hard to defeat. It was garrisoned by large numbers of sepoy regiments, and the task before Sir John Lawrence, the Governor, was therefore one of exceptional difficulty. He had to disarm or defeat the sepoys, who were on the point of mutiny, with the aid of Sikhs, who, though racially enemies of the Bengal sepoys, were yet so recently made subjects of the British *raj* that their loyalty was not a thing one could depend on.

When the message along the wires reached Lahore, the capital of the Punjab, Sir John Lawrence was on his way to the hills for a holiday, but in his place was a man fully as resolute and far-seeing as his chief. This was Robert Montgomery, who, though of a genial

and gentle aspect (he was known as 'Pickwick' among his intimates), possessed an iron will and a forceful personality. The city was peopled by restless Sikhs and Mohammedans, who resembled a powder magazine in the swiftness with which they would burst into revolt against the power of the British *raj* on the first sign of weakness. Montgomery had under him a small garrison of English and native troops, but at the cantonment of Meeanmeer, a few miles away, were four native regiments, the 81st Queen's, who were British, and two troops of European horse artillery.

Montgomery set his native spies to work, and in a few hours heard of the plot which he had expected would be contrived. The troops in the city were to rise on the 15th May, and after slaying their officers were to signal to the cantonments, whereupon the regiments there were to break out and overpower the white soldiers. This revolt was to be followed by mutiny throughout the Bari Doab, the district between the Ravee and the Sutlej.

Montgomery took instant counsel with Brigadier Corbett, the officer in command at Meeanmeer, and their plans were arranged. There was to be a ball on the night of the 12th, and a parade of all the regiments was called for the morning of the 13th for the purpose of reading the order issued by the Government for the disbandment of the 34th at Barrackpore. It was decided to disarm the sepoys at this parade.

Some urged that the ball should be postponed, but this was overruled: it was pointed out that if this were done it might arouse the suspicions of the sepoys. Hardly one of the guests at the ball knew of the real object of the parade to be held in the morning. Dancing, to the music of the regimental band, was kept up till two o'clock in the morning, and a few hours later the officers hurried to their stations at the head of each regiment, which were then falling in on the parade-ground in the dim light of the dawn.

The orders as to the disbandment of the Barrackpore mutineers were read, and then the command was given to the native regiments to "change front to the rear." At the same time the 81st also changed front, and when the sepoys had assumed their new position they found themselves facing the British troops, whom they outnumbered, however, by eight to one. Some of the sepoys looked suspiciously at the lines of white soldiers, when suddenly the commanding officer began to speak in a keen stern voice.

"As you have doubtless heard," he began, "there are many regiments who have forgotten whose bread and salt they eat, who have slain their officers and forsworn their oaths of loyalty. There are bad men coming here. Therefore, to prevent you from falling into temptation and disgracing yourselves and the colours you serve, you are about to be deprived of your arms. Pile arms!"

As the stern order rang out over the parade-ground a quick movement seemed to run down the lines of sepoys; it was as if they prepared to spring. At the same moment, however, the lines of the 81st fell back and revealed the black mouths of twelve cannon pointing full at the native ranks, with an artilleryman beside each gun, his port-fire burning in his hand.

"Eighty-first! Load!"

As if a spring had been loosed along the line of red-coats the men swiftly thrust in their ramrods, and, as they clanged home, the sepoys, with fierce and hateful glances, showed that they realized that they were beaten. The whole of the lines suddenly bent and laid their muskets at their feet, and then, unbuckling their belts, they added pouches and swords. A company of the 81st instantly swept them up.

Thus six hundred British men, by pluck and decision, disarmed a body of native troops whose outbreak into mutiny would have overwhelmed the whole of the Punjab. Moreover, the example given by Mr Montgomery and Brigadier Corbett was one which was followed almost without exception by commanders at other stations, and thus by promptness and unflinching courage the spread of the mutiny was limited. The eastern half of the Punjab could now be accounted safe.

Far away in the most northerly part of the province, however, lay the town of Peshawar, situated in a little plain in the valley of the same name. It was a mean little place, a typical frontier town, whose history had

known much more of bloody fighting than of peaceful pursuits. Its fort, situated at the northern end, rose some ninety feet into the keen mountain air and dominated the valley which, lying in the midst of grand and rugged mountain scenery, stretched for sixty miles through varied conditions of wilderness and cultivated land, every yard of which had once been warm with running blood, in the border fights and forays of two thousand years.

Peshawar was the farthest outpost of the order and law of the British *raj*, in face of the wild and lawless tribes of Afridis and Mohmunds who, as untameable as their native hills, looked down from their fastnesses and wondered when, if ever, they would again be able to storm down into the peaceful valleys, looting and slaying. When the news of the outbreak at Meerut and the seizure of Delhi came to the bazaars of the city and was carried to the tribesmen's huts of the remoter valleys of the Punjab, many a keen mind among the Sikh and Mohammedan chieftains wondered: Would the sahibs be able to hold Peshawar? When they heard how the sepoys had been disarmed at Lahore many smiled grimly, knowing that their chances for revolt were lessened, but still they had hopes that Peshawar might light a fire out of which they might pick many a rich booty, or in the smoke of which a few still unsatisfied vendettas would find settlement.

It was during these days, when men were all expectant for news either that the white men were to

show that they were still to be masters, or were to be wiped out by the army they themselves had created, that a well-known civilian, as he rode about his duties, met a wise old Sikh chieftain whom he often met and whom he knew well. They spoke of various things, and then the Sikh asked:

"Is Peshawar still quiet?"

"This is the third day you have asked me that question," replied the Civil Servant; "why do you ask?"

The old Sikh took up the end of his silken scarf and, rolling it up, held it out to the other.

"If Peshawar goes," he said, "the whole Punjab will be rolled up in rebellion like that!"

Happily for the British *raj* there were some of the keenest brains and most resolute hearts among the men in authority doing their work of ruling in that little corner of the vast Indian dominions. Chief of these was the Head Commissioner, Lieutenant-Colonel Herbert Edwardes, the beloved disciple of that great ruler, Sir Henry Lawrence. Edwardes was not cast wholly in the official mould: he was gay, imaginative, and high spirited, and while toiling day after day at the routine work of his office, he could still keep the light heart that laughed at drudgery, or bad news, or depression.

There were three other men with Edwardes, one of whom was to gain greater renown than his chief during the tragic time of the mutiny. This was Colonel John

Nicholson, Deputy-Commissioner of Peshawar. Though only thirty-five he had already gained a reputation for daring in battle and for wisdom in administration second to no man of his age. He was indeed a man cast in a special mould; mingled with a burning impetuosity and zeal was an icy reserve and haughty manner which incensed many; his temper could blaze out in overwhelming measure, and his freedom of speech respected neither official superiors nor well-meaning and amiable busybodies. In spite of the faults which were the excesses of his strong nature many loved him and recognized his high gifts. Lord Dalhousie, the former Governor-General, had termed him "a tower of strength," and Herbert Edwardes, speaking of him to Lord Canning, said that "if ever there is a desperate deed to be done in India, John Nicholson is the man to do it."

The mixture of stern justice, manliness, and bravery which his administration of a wild district had displayed had so tamed the lawless and blood-thirsty tribesmen under his rule that, in the last year of his office, he had had no case of crime, and when he left the district the natives described him by the names of their most revered great men in history. A certain fraternity of fakirs, or wandering devotees, in one district actually looked upon him as a god, and the more he thrashed them for their credulity, the more convinced they were of the godlike qualities of 'Nikkul Seyn.'

How the Punjab was Saved

Edwardes and Nicholson, together with their two chief military officers, General Reed and Colonel Cotton, and Neville Chamberlain, the military chief of a neighbouring district, held a council of war and took measures for safeguarding Peshawar. The troops in the valley consisted of eight thousand sepoys and not quite three thousand British soldiers. Only one of the sepoy regiments was believed to be loyal, and one was so notoriously rebellious that it was scattered in outpost duties at various distant places. There was evidence enough to show that the insolence which every day was becoming more marked in the behaviour of the sepoys was the outcome of a widespread conspiracy to destroy the power of the British. Letters from sepoys in Bengal to their friends at Peshawar had been intercepted at the post-office, giving descriptions of the outrages and atrocities committed upon white people, and urging the recipients to follow the examples shown at Meerut and Delhi.

One of the first plans formed by Colonel Nicholson was for the creation of a body of troops drawn from among the retainers of the native chiefs in the valley itself to aid the Europeans in making head against the mutineers. He went about from chief to chief, urging this idea. The Sikh chieftains, having consulted together, returned this answer:

"We know that Delhi is not in your hands, and that the evil ones are growing in power daily. You have done little to make us believe that you are still the

masters, and we refuse to risk our people's lives in your weak cause. Show us that you are the stronger—that you are the masters—and we will bring to you all we have."

In a few days the proof required by the wise chiefs was forthcoming. On the night of the 21st, Edwardes and Nicholson lay down to sleep in their clothes, fearing, from some references in the letters they had intercepted, that there would be trouble before dawn. At midnight they were awakened by a messenger who, breathless with his swift running, told them that the companies of the 55th Native Infantry stationed at Nowshera, to the east of Peshawar, had revolted, and that the 10th Irregular Cavalry at the same place might mutiny at any moment.

The two chiefs took counsel together ; and the result was stated by Edwardes in these terms :

"The main body of the 55th at Murdan [a station due north of Nowshera] will probably follow their brothers. We cannot send a force from here without dangerously weakening Peshawar. Besides, the native troops here will soon learn what has been done, and they too will break out into mutiny. Before we can deal with the 55th we must disarm our sepoys here."

Having arrived at this decision the two friends set off for the quarters of Colonel Cotton, who concurred in their view of the matter. But the English colonels of the various native regiments had to be told of what was proposed, and at the council held with them at

daybreak these officers pleaded almost with tears against the disgrace which was to be placed upon their beloved "*baba-log*" (children). But foresight and determination won the day. Colonel Cotton, as chief officer, determined to spare one regiment of infantry and two of irregular cavalry, believing that these were as yet untainted with mutiny.

Within an hour after the council rose, the orders went forth for a parade of all arms. Some of the local chiefs, hearing of the sudden order, guessed what it meant, and came on the parade-ground, warily watching to see which side was going to win, and resolved to act accordingly. The evolutions on the parade-ground seemed to be of the ordinary nature, but as the result of them the five native regiments were found to be facing a line of British muskets. Then came the curt order: "Pile arms!" The utter unexpectedness of the order, and the sight of the ready British soldiers were too much for the sepoys. Without a murmur they obeyed. Their arms were picked up and piled on a cart, and as they were driven from the ground some of the British officers, moved beyond measure by this dishonour, pulled off their spurs and took off their swords, throwing them also among the arms of their beloved soldiers.

Thus, the determination of the British still to remain masters having been shown, the chiefs on the parade-ground came up and professed their readiness to take the side of the white sahibs henceforth. In a few hours

the other chiefs of the valley came in and together threw their swords down before the feet of Colonel Cotton, saying that henceforth they and their men were at the service of the British *raj*. That very day some hundreds of men were enrolled to take the place of the mutineers who had been disbanded, and henceforth there was no lack of recruits for the famous Movable Column which Nicholson at once proceeded to form.

News now came of the mutiny of the main body of the 55th at Murdan. They had approached a party of Pathans who were stationed at Attock, on the Indus, and tried to persuade them to revolt; but the Pathans had remained loyal and had sent word of the treachery to Peshawar. Meanwhile, Colonel Spottiswoode, the commandant of the 55th, wrote to assure Cotton that he had complete confidence in his men, and urging him not to send troops against them. On the night of the 24th, however, a small force under Colonel Chute, with John Nicholson as Political Officer, was within a few miles of Murdan. Word of this was swiftly brought to the 55th, and their native officers, ignorant, apparently, of the intending mutiny of their men, went to Colonel Spottiswoode asking him whether the armed force was to be used against their men. The Colonel had the usual blind confidence in his sepoys; he could not deny that the force was to be used against the regiment, and the officers left his presence much depressed. The Colonel himself, overwhelmed at the

prospect of the disgrace to be imposed upon his soldiers, then committed suicide.

At sunrise, seeing the column from Peshawar moving toward them, the 55th openly mutinied, fired on their white officers, and then, taking the regimental colours and the treasury, broke out from the fort and fled toward the hills. The column chased them, but the ground was too rough for artillery, and Nicholson, ordering a few of his own police troopers to his side, continued the pursuit. The mutineers broke and ran in small parties, the vengeful Nicholson hot upon their tracks. To and fro he chased them, routing them out of the villages in which they strove to hide, cutting down their stragglers in ravines, and taking prisoners those who threw away their weapons and yielded. All through the torrid day the stern unyielding spirit of Nicholson hunted, slew, and wounded; nor did the berserker rage of the white man cease until, having ridden seventy miles, slain a hundred and twenty, wounded between three and four hundred, taken a hundred and fifty prisoners, and recovered two hundred stand of arms and the regimental colours, he was forced by nightfall to sound a halt, while the remnant of the mutineers fled across the border into the hills. For months they wandered in the desolate regions of the wilderness, without food, without shelter, every man's hand against them, until of the remnant some laid down their arms and suffered for their rebellion, and others were sold into slavery.

CHAPTER XI

ON THE RIDGE AT DELHI

THE little army that had been sent to retake Delhi became known as the 'Army of Retribution,' and from one end of India to the other, wherever there were British men and women, anxious and hopeful thoughts were turned in its direction in the belief that soon it would avenge the slaughtered women and children, and would teach the mutineers that the power of the white man was still the greatest in the land.

But General Barnard and his officers soon realized that without further large reinforcements the task before them was beyond their powers. Here was a little army of some 3000 men clinging to a ridge which lay at one point in the vicinity of a great city, whose strong walls stretched seven miles round, and whose population contained 40,000 revolted sepoys, the numbers of which were daily being increased by mutineers from distant stations. There was, therefore, no question of besieging the city; all that could be done was to hold on to the Ridge, to keep the British flag flying, and thus to be a constant menace to the insolence and pride of the rebels, until such time as reinforcements should arrive to

enable a determined assault to be made upon the city.

The Ridge is a long low hill not more than sixty feet high, running to within 1200 yards of the city's northern wall. At its southern extremity, lying outside the Kabul Gate, was the suburb of Kissengunge. Nearer the cantonments of the British, which lay on the north-west slope of the Ridge, were points around which, during the weeks which followed, the blood of white man and sepoy was poured out in the fiercest fighting. These, counting southward from the cantonments, were the Flagstaff Tower, which stood on the highest point of the Ridge; then came a mosque, an observatory, and, on the right of the Ridge, a large dwelling called Hindu Rao's house. To the right of the latter lay the suburb of Subzee Mundee, between which and Kissengunge and the city walls lay ground which was covered with ruins, old mosques, tombs, trees and bushes, thus making admirable cover for the enemy in attacking the camp. At all these points, except in the two suburbs, General Barnard placed pickets.

Between the Ridge and the bank of the Jumna was a wide space, ranging in width from a mile to two miles. In this were two buildings which were at first in the hands of the mutineers. The most northerly position was known as Metcalfe House (the residence of a civilian of Delhi at the time of the insurrection); the other, distant about half a mile from the most

northerly of the city gates—the Kashmir Gate—was known as Ludlow Castle.

The English went into camp before Delhi on the evening of the 8th June. Next morning, into the cantonments rode the first instalment of reinforcements from the Punjab. These were the Corps of Guides, and the cheers that greeted them were given again and again, for every British soldier in camp knew of the fame of these fighters. This corps, consisting of three troops of cavalry and six companies of infantry, was composed wholly of natives selected for their intelligence, bravery, and endurance. Every wild tribe on the untamed frontiers of the northwest and north was represented in its ranks, and most were typical mountaineers, only happy when in the thick of battle. The regiment had travelled twenty-seven miles a day for three weeks, having started from Murdan, 570 miles away, on the 13th of May. The march was long famous as one of the great achievements during these anxious days.

Little rest did the brave Guides crave, and little rest was given them. A heavy cannonade was carried on by the rebels from the city against the camp of the British, and under cover of this a desperate attack was made on the right flank, where, at Hindu Rao's house, the outpost consisted of two companies of the 60th, with two guns. The sepoys, maddened with *bhang* and opium, fought like fiends, and being as

bitterly opposed by the British, the fight was of the fiercest and most deadly description.

At length the opportunity craved by the Guides was given them. Like living thunderbolts the cavalry dashed at the sepoys, scattered them like chaff, hacking and slashing at the flying figures. Forgetting where they were, they pursued the fugitives to the very walls of the city, whence instantly a deadly fire was poured upon them. Daly, the gallant Irishman who commanded the Guides, was wounded, and young Quentin Battye, the darling of his dusky men, was carried back dying, having been struck in the stomach by a round shot. "Joyous, boyish, but a noble fellow, whose every thought was honour," is the description left of him. Waiting for death, he felt glad to die thus for his country: "'*Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori.*' That's how it is with me," he said to a friend beside his bed.

Next day the sepoys made another determined attempt to wrest Hindu Rao's house from the British. If they could only gain possession of this and hold it, they would command the whole position of the Europeans. On this day the Gurkhas—short, sturdy little Highlanders from the mountains of Nepaul—held the house under their leader, Major Reid. As the sepoys came on, they cried out to the Gurkhas, "Don't fire! We want to speak to you. Come and join us!"

"Yes, yes, we are coming!" replied the Gurkhas

with grim glee, and they ran forward without firing, as if hastening to fraternize with the rebels. Arriving within thirty yards of the line of sepoys, who stood also without firing, the Gurkhas poured a withering fire into the enemy, who, taken by surprise, fled, leaving a great number dead. After this the Gurkhas always occupied this post, and could be relied upon to give a good account of themselves to the enemy.

A plan to capture the city by a surprise attack was now concocted by several of the more reckless spirits, headed by Hodson. General Barnard, though he consented to it, seemed to take no interest in the scheme. It soon became too evident, indeed, that the post which he held was too much for him. He was not morally strong enough to face the enormous task placed upon him. He knew that the Government expected him to take Delhi speedily: indeed the whole salvation of British power in India depended upon striking a blow at the rebels which should destroy their chief rallying point and thereby have a steadying effect upon regiments and princes who were shaking in their loyalty. But the General knew the impossibility of attempting anything of a decisive character with the small forces at his command, and not being able to face the position with the stern calm of a great nature, he fretted and despaired. He was eager to fulfil all the expectations reposed in him, but was bitterly conscious of the reproaches which he knew

that his men in camp flung at him, and which he knew the Government were also heaping upon him.

The plan thus made to wrest the city from the rebels was never put into execution, much to the disappointment of Hodson and his friends.

The efforts of the sepoys to carry the camp never ceased. On the 12th an attack in force was made on the position both on the flank and in the rear. The rebels dragged some guns into position in the grounds of Metcalfe House, and thence sent a withering fire into the British lines. A call was made for volunteers, and after desperate fighting the white men drove them from this place, a picket was placed there, and communication was kept open between it and the Flagstaff Tower. The enemy also made repeated attempts to capture Hindu Rao's house. "They came on," writes Hodson, "very boldly, and got most heartily thrashed." On the 17th it was reported by Hodson's spies that the sepoys were building a battery in the village of Kissengunge, the fire from which would have commanded the very huts of the camp. Small bodies of troops dashed upon them, commanded by Lieutenant Tombs and Major Reid, smashed up the battery and drove the enemy to the city. Three hundred sepoys were killed and wounded, while the British had only three killed and twelve wounded.

In these skirmishes and struggles the fighting was of a most determined character. Neither the European nor the sepoy gave or expected quarter. The rebel

knew that if he were taken he would share the fate which the British column had meted out all along its road from Umballa, when daily it shot or hanged, or blew from the guns, villagers and others whom it suspected of having tortured or maltreated the refugees from Delhi. As for the white soldiers, one of them described the feelings of himself and his fellows in the following words: "Our blood is roused; we have seen friends, relations, mothers, wives, and children brutally murdered, and their bodies mutilated frightfully. This alone, without that pluck which made us victorious over the Russians, would enable us, with God's assistance, to be victorious over these enemies. As the riflemen charge—ten to a hundred—the word is passed, 'Remember the ladies! remember the babies!' and everything flies before them."

Fierce attacks were made on the British position by the fresh mutineers who daily arrived in large numbers at Delhi. It was the habit of the chiefs of the rebels to send out these reinforcements to show their spirit by assailing the camp of the sahibs. The 23rd of June, however, was a day which the sepoys had marked for a special effort. This was the centenary of the battle of Plassey, at which Clive, by his victory over the French general, Dupleix, had founded the Empire of the British in India. Some crazy pundits had told the rebels that a prophecy existed to the effect that British rule would come to an end on that day. In great force, therefore, the sepoys moved out

to Subzee Mundee, and having mounted guns there, they raked the right flank of the British with a most galling fire. Our first attacks failed, but just then word was received that reinforcements were at hand. These consisted of 850 men of the 4th Sikhs and the 2nd Fusiliers, who arrived in camp after a march of twenty-two miles. Without resting they went gaily into battle, using the bayonet with such effect that great numbers of the rebels were slain, and the rest were cleared out of the Subzee Mundee, which was thereafter occupied by the British. Smarting from their wounds and conscious of the losses they had suffered, the sepoys must have been quite convinced that, in spite of the prophecy, the British *raj* was still far from being at an end.

All these battles, however, though they gave occasion for magnificent heroism and brave deeds on both sides, did not advance matters. Thirty attacks had been beaten off by the end of June, but we were no nearer laying real siege to the town, nor taking it by assault. The batteries of the British, at 1500 yards from the walls, were too remote for their fire to have any effect, either on the walls or upon the batteries of the enemy. General Barnard had by now 6000 men under his command, but many more would be necessary before he could hope to assault the city. Furthermore, the siege train, consisting of forty heavy guns, mortars, and howitzers, which were being collected at Phillour, must arrive before

breaches could be made in the walls. The whole hope of taking Delhi, indeed, depended upon the safe arrival of this train.

On the 5th July Sir Henry Barnard was seized with cholera, and died the same day. He was succeeded by General Reid, whose ill-health, however, compelled him to give up the command to Brigadier Wilson. The latter's conduct at Meerut, however, offered no augury of great generalship. The British now received reinforcements to the extent of about 600 men, but at the same time the strength of the sepoys was also increased by the addition of 4000 fresh mutineers, among them being Bakht Khan, who had led the mutiny at Bareilly. Soon after arriving at Delhi he was made Commander-in-Chief of the King's army.

The sepoys now determined to try to break the communications of the British with the Punjab. The possession of this road was vital to General Wilson, for it was by this avenue that he received supplies and sent back his wounded to Umballa. The way was kept clear by native troops who, though they were thought to be thoroughly reliable, were in no great strength. The sepoys marched to Alipore, drove off the Sikh guard, and spent their fury on the inhabitants of the village. Much to their disappointment, however, they found neither treasure nor convoys of wounded British. They retraced their steps homeward, but Hodson, who was chief of the Intelligence

Department of the British Army, had marked their exit from the city, and on their return Major Coke with a thousand men intercepted them and gave them a good thrashing. During the next few days the road was still further secured by blowing up certain bridges leading from Delhi, and the guard was strengthened, thus securing the rear of the British Army.

With July came the time of heavy rains, which rendered the work of fighting much heavier; nevertheless the spirit of the men was unbroken. Time after time they assembled to the bugle call which warned them of attack, and in heavy and continuous rain they hurled the sepoys back, returning drenched to the skin.

On July 9th one of the most heroic actions of the many brave deeds of this time was performed by two officers, Hills and Tombs. There was treachery in the camp of the British. Some of the 9th Irregular Cavalry were on outpost duty, guarding the trunk road. Down this road came a detachment of the 8th Irregulars, who had recently joined the mutineers in Delhi. There were evidently friends of the 9th Cavalry among them, for the latter gave no warning of their approach, and, breaking from cover, the rebels dashed upon the camp.

The first Europeans they met were a troop of the Carabineers. The latter were not trained soldiers and were only thirty-two in number, and being taken by surprise they broke and streamed away. It hap-

pened that there were two guns placed just near their line of flight, which were commanded by Lieutenant Hills. The latter, seeing the Carabineers flying before the rebel troopers, ran from his tent, jumped on his horse, and, with a warning shout to his gunners, he rode single-handed against the column of cavalry.

"I thought that by charging them," he wrote subsequently, "I might make a commotion and give the guns time to load, so in I went at the front rank, cut down the first fellow, and slashed the next across the face as hard as I could, when two *sowars* (troopers) attacked me. Both their horses crashed into mine at the same moment, and of course both horse and myself were sent flying. We went down at such a pace that I escaped the cuts made at me, one of them giving my jacket an awful slice just below the left arm—it only, however, cut the jacket." He lay on the ground quietly until all the troopers had dashed past and over him, then he rose and looked about for his sword, which he found ten yards away. He had hardly got hold of it when he saw three of the mutineers returning, two on horseback. As the first rode at him Hills cut at and wounded the man, who swayed and dropped. The second charged him with his lance, but the Englishman pushed it aside and caught the man an awful gash on the head and face. The horse flew past with the man clinging to it. The first man then came at him again, but Hills, with one stroke, split his skull. Now the footman came against

him, a young active fellow. Hills found himself getting very weak from want of breath, the fall from his horse having pumped him, and his cloak, somehow or other, had got tightly twisted round his throat, and was almost choking him. He went for the sepoy, however, and cut at him on the shoulder, but the blow was turned aside by some thick cloth. The trooper managed to seize the hilt of Hills' sword and twisted the weapon out of his grasp. Hills drew his pistol, but it missed fire twice, and in his rage the Englishman threw it at his opponent's head, but it did not strike him. Then they had a hand-to-hand set-to, Hills hammering the man with his fists, and the sepoy trying to cut him down, an endeavour frustrated by the officer being too close to him.

Suddenly Hills slipped and fell. Next moment the sepoy would have slain him, but fortunately Lieutenant Tombs rode up and at a distance of thirty paces shot the trooper with his pistol. Hills then got up, but was at once attacked by another sepoy who had come up. The latter gave the Lieutenant a severe cut on the head with his sabre, but next moment Tombs had cut him down, and then conducted Hills to camp. For these brave actions both Hills and Tombs received the Victoria Cross.

Meanwhile the troopers had caused some confusion in the camp, had cut down one or two native servants, and seized some horses. But their triumph was short-lived, for they were quickly driven back,

leaving many slain; and then their rout was followed up by a column composed of British and Sikh infantry, which swept down upon the main body of the sepoys hiding in the gardens and houses near the town and cleared them out with great loss.

During July the mutineers made several other attacks upon the Ridge, only to be beaten back each time by the unconquerable little army who clung to it. Thus, in spite of the incessant efforts of the sepoys to overwhelm the puny force of the British, the flag on the Flagstaff Tower still unfurled its red folds, a perpetual menace to the mutinous city.

CHAPTER XII

NICHOLSON AT DELHI

WHILE these events were passing, far away in Rawal Pindi and Peshawar opinions had become divided as to the desirability of continuing what seemed to many to be a vain effort to conquer the rebel city of Delhi. Wilson himself, the general in command on the Ridge, thought the army might be doing better work elsewhere, and others were of like mind. Edwardes, in Peshawar, seeing the many British soldiers who were marching south to the Ridge, wrote asking Sir John Lawrence to spare him some with which to secure his position in Peshawar. "You know," he wrote, "on what a nest of devils we stand. Once let us take our foot up and we shall be stung to death." Edwardes did not advise that Delhi should be given up, but he knew that there was still danger in the Punjab, and thought that it was being unwisely stripped of white troops.

As the weeks went by and the little army on the Ridge seemed as far off as ever from achieving its task of smashing the rebels in Delhi, Sir John Lawrence wrote to Edwardes, saying that he proposed to take all the white troops and the new native levies from Peshawar, and send them to reinforce the Ridge.

The proposal was perfectly amazing to Edwardes and Nicholson, and the chief military officer, Colonel Cotton, shared their feeling. Such a suggestion was equivalent to abandoning the Punjab, for they well knew what the effect would be. The Afghans, who, they knew, were meditating an attack on Peshawar; the Afridis, and other frontier tribes, many of whom, after the disarming of the sepoys, had flocked to the standard of the British; the Sikhs, followers of the neighbouring Punjab chieftains, who had also enrolled themselves under the men whom they now recognized were the masters of India—all these would look upon the desertion of Peshawar as a confession of weakness; in their own forceful way of speaking they would say that the English power was like a little man who found that he did not fit a big coat—India and its rebels were too strong for it.

What would the result be? Every mountain valley, as soon as the word went round, would pour out its fighting men, every tortuous pass and gorge would swarm with fierce-eyed, black-bearded warriors, their faces lit up with glee, their eyes turned one way—to the rich valley of Peshawar and the gleaming towns in the grassy meadows along the Five Rivers.

Earnestly did Edwardes and Cotton lay all these considerations before Sir John, who, feeling that the decision should be left to the supreme authority in India, asked Lord Canning to decide between himself and Edwardes. In a few days the reply came from

Calcutta in short and decisive words: "Hold on to Peshawar to the last."

Already, indeed, disaffection at various stations in the Punjab had only been nipped in the bud by the resolute action of Colonel Nicholson, who, at the head of the famous Movable Column of loyal native troops which he had raised, went from place to place overawing and disarming the disloyal troops. The Column itself had to be purged of its mutinous leaven more than once. By the end of July so thoroughly had he done his work that the Punjab was practically saved, and almost every disloyal regiment was powerless. There were, however, still some anxious days to be passed before the whole spirit of mutiny was throttled, but strong men, possessing the requisite energy and fierce sternness, were at hand to do this necessary work.

On the morning of the last day of July some villagers, going about their daily work in the fields near Balghat, on the banks of the Ravee, were surprised to see approaching them a crowd of sepoys, wearing no arms and apparently much agitated, who asked to be directed to the nearest ford. The shrewd villagers guessed that something was amiss, and on one pretext or another they kept the sepoys near at hand while they sent to warn the authorities. Presently the native revenue officer arrived with his police, and learned that the men were mutineers of the 26th Native Infantry who had broken out in

mutiny at Lahore the previous day and had murdered four of their officers. The native officer quickly made his decision. These men were malefactors and should be captured. Then ensued a fight between the police, aided by the villagers, and the sepoys. Of the latter 150 were slain, and the rest, swimming or floating on pieces of wood, reached an island in mid-stream, where they crouched and hid, fearing to venture farther.

When, toward evening, there arrived on the track of the mutineers Frederick Cooper, the Deputy Commissioner of the district, with some Punjabee horse and foot, 282 were captured and conveyed to the town of Ujnala and lodged in various places of safety. A great responsibility lay upon Mr Cooper, but he resolved not to shirk it, as so many had shirked stern duties during the last few weeks. He had no means of transporting these mutineers to a town where they could be properly tried and punished, seeing that the force he had was too weak. They were all guilty of murder and rebellion, and would undoubtedly be condemned to death. He resolved, therefore, to have them all executed at once, so that the report of the stern act of justice, being carried far and wide through the Punjab, should strike fear into the hearts of the sepoys who were on the verge of mutiny.

Next day, therefore, they were brought out in batches of ten and shot by some Sikh soldiers he had

with him. Through inadvertence sixty-six had been locked up in a closed room, and of these, forty-five were found asphyxiated. The dead bodies of all the mutineers were collected and thrown into a well by men of the lowest caste. "There is a well at Cawnpore," said Cooper in his report, "but there is also a well at Ujnala."

Some blamed Cooper for this terrible, wholesale act of retribution, but his superiors, Mr Montgomery and Sir John Lawrence, upheld him, saying that the punishment was "just and necessary." The lesson was a sharp one indeed, and it had its due force, for thereby the Lahore division was saved, and no further mutinies took place in it.

At Peshawar also there was trouble, quelled, however, by an instantaneous and heavy blow. A mendicant fanatic sowed mutiny in the lines of the sepoys there; they rushed to arms and fled, only to be followed and hunted down in a terrible heat, with the persistence of the wolf after its prey. All but sixty were slain. "Seven hundred comrades," wrote Edwardes, "who yesterday were ripe for the murder of European officers, and ladies, and little children, to-day lay dead in three deep trenches." Thenceforth there was peace at Peshawar.

During this period on the Ridge at Delhi there were days of doubt and gloom. The delay in receiving reinforcements and the siege train, and the apparent hopelessness of the little army ever being able to

seize the great city before them, ate into the hearts of the English. "I confess," wrote Hodson, whose courage, as a rule, never failed, "sometimes it requires all one's trust in the God of Battles, and all the comforting and sustaining words of those nearest and dearest to us, to bear up boldly and bravely through these weary days."

Personal discomfort and fatigue also helped to depress the troops. The men were of the finest quality, but, after all, they were but men. It was now the rainy season; the soldiers fought for hours in the pouring rain, and on coming back to camp, exhausted and wet through, often found their tents leaking like sieves. During the last six weeks they had fought on an average three battles per week, and human endurance could hardly bear the strain. Nerves began to suffer; the soldiers hated every black face about them; many declared that all the camp followers ought to be killed, since they were Hindus like the mutineers; and frequently they repaid the services of the humble folk with blows and fierce words. It is to the credit of Brigadier Wilson that he set his face against this conduct, and gradually he brought better discipline into the camp, and protected the native servants, without whose service, indeed, the life of the camp could not have proceeded.

When, on the 7th August, Colonel Nicholson rode into the camp on the Ridge the spirits of the rank and file began to rise. He was one of the most popular men

in India, yet in some respects he was the object of a good deal of dislike and jealousy. He did not admire routine and official delays; he was apt to speak too bluntly to his superiors, and to go his own way and do things as he thought they ought to be done. He was a man of a striking personality, whose every glance, every gesture showed that he thought and felt for himself, not according to common standards. He was of fine physique, broad-chested, and standing over six feet in height. His face was colourless, with a full dark beard, and in his grey eyes was a strange glow which, when he was moved, shone with a hard piercing light that only strong men could receive without flinching.

He was a young man of thirty-six, considerably younger, indeed, than many of the officers and officials with whom he had had to deal and was yet to deal with, and many resented the position which his forceful personality and his friends, the Lawrences, had made for him. He had really no other than a civil position, and many army officers affected still to speak of him as Mr Nicholson.

Nicholson had practically been sent with his moveable column to see that Delhi was taken. His masterful will, the achievements he had already performed, his resoluteness and his inherent power of leadership would make the common soldiery his loyal and joyful followers in any forlorn hope or attempt of reckless daring; but what of the officers, men brought up in red

tape and official swaddling clothes? Indeed, not only had Nicholson to take Delhi—he had the harder task of driving others to carry out plans which they opposed.

As already stated, Nicholson rode into camp on the 7th August. But that was because his impatience had driven him far in advance of his column, which only marched in on the 14th. It was composed of the 52nd Foot, half the 61st Foot, the 2nd Punjabi Infantry, and Bourchier's Battery. A further portion was expected in a few days. Besides these, the siege train was wending its dilatory way along the road from Phillour. It consisted of cannon with which to beat holes in the walls of Delhi, through which the army could force its way into the city. Drawn by bullocks, and escorted by a weak guard of native troops, the forty howitzers, mortars, and other guns were trundling along, with much clatter and noise, toward the Ridge. The approach of this formidable reinforcement was not unmarked by the rebels, and, hoping to cut it off and either to capture the guns or heave them into some deep stream, they resolved to send a column forth under the command of Bakht Khan.

Hodson's spies brought word of the proposal, and Nicholson resolved to cut off the mutineers. At the head of 1000 Europeans and some 2000 native soldiers, he therefore set forth early next morning in the direction of a suburb named Bahadoorgurh. The road was a mere bullock-track, and it was raining in sheets, drenching everything. The ground was a muddy

stream, through which the infantry slipped and fell, and the bullocks could hardly pull the guns, the wheels of which often sank to their axles and refused to turn, until the gunners put their shoulders to them. All around were paddy fields under water and quaking marshes, and the scene was a depressing and wretched one. The wind beat and the rain poured all the morning. In seven hours only ten miles had been covered. A halt was then called, and Sir Theophilus Metcalfe, formerly a civilian at Delhi, who now served as a volunteer, went forward with two officers in search of the enemy, whom they found at the village of Nujufgarh.

Another two hours plodding and slipping brought the army in sight of the sepoys, who were drawn up on the other side of a nullah, or river course. Their position was excellently chosen. The stream before them was of unknown depth, and the water now ran swiftly and strong. In their centre was a *serai*, or courtyard for travellers; on their right was an arm of the Nujufgarh Canal, and their left rested on the village itself. The British Army, under the fire of the enemy, forced the stream, and all were on the opposite side just as dusk came on. As each man emerged from the water he was ordered to lie down, the batteries were placed in position, and Nicholson then, in his deep, sonorous voice, spoke a few words. "Now, 61st," he said, "I have but a few words to say. You all know what Sir Colin Campbell told his men, both at

Chillianwallah and at the Alma: that is, 'Hold your fire till within twenty or thirty yards of that battery, and then, my boys, we will make short work of it.'"

The gunners pitched a few shots at the mass of sepoys in and about the *serai*, and then, leaping to their feet with zest and swiftness, in spite of their having slithered and slipped through eighteen miles of mud, the infantry sprang forward amid a shower of grape and musket balls, Nicholson at the head of them. The ground was sheer bog, and the men slid and slipped again and again. A low hill gave them protection for a little while from the rain of bullets; doggedly they climbed its firmer flank, and then at the top the storm of shot tore at them again. The great figure on the horse still rode before them. "Steady!" came the sonorous voice, "hold your fire, men! I'll give the word."

Thus while men slipped, and some who were struck fell, choking or groaning, the 1500 advanced against the 6000.

"Now, my boys! Let them have it!"

From their ranks poured flame in one long line, then with a cheer the infantry dashed forward. Into the *serai* they rushed, stabbing with the bayonet all who withstood them. A few moments, and in a crowd the sepoys had fled from their guns, and were crying, "To Delhi, brothers, to Delhi!"

But Nicholson with his keen glance had taken in their line of retreat, and now his deep voice was issuing

commands. Then rapidly changing front to the left, the white soldiers outflanked more sepoy gunners stationed between the *serai* and the canal. The mutineers dashed at the bridge leading to Delhi, but our gunners were pouring shot into the thick of them. The rebels jammed on the bridge and were cut up terribly. At the same time the Punjabi infantry had rushed the village of Nujufgarh with the bayonet, and then learning that there were still more sepoys in the rear of the British, they dashed thither. Here the rebels fought well, for their retreat was cut off, and they knew that shameful death by being blown from the guns would be theirs if they were taken alive. It was early morning before the last of the desperate sepoys was killed and the village wholly won.

Thirteen guns were captured in this fight, and 800 men killed or wounded. The rest, a wild mob, ran to Delhi to spread another tale of the unconquerable half-man, half-god, Nikkul Seyn.

The British slept on the wet ground, and at daybreak started to return to the Ridge. They reached camp thirty-six hours after they had left it, twenty-four hours of which they had been without food. They had fought a stiff fight and marched over almost impassable roads. Footsore and famishing for food they reached the Ridge, to be welcomed by the bands which played them in, and to crack jokes as they marched through the lane formed by their fellows.

On the 4th September the siege train arrived, and

spirits rose higher. Delhi must soon be taken now, the soldiers said. But in the heart of their commander, Brigadier Wilson, there was still hesitation and doubt. He must have more men yet; the forty guns would enable him to take "more active measures," but he must still wait for reinforcements from Calcutta! Baird Smith, head of the engineers, opposed this idea vehemently. An attack must be made quickly, he said, lest the rebels should learn of the British plans and have time to strengthen their defences. Very well, replied Wilson; he had no great hopes himself of success, but he would not oppose the idea of a speedy assault any longer. Sir John Lawrence urged the vital importance of Delhi being taken speedily: all India was waiting and watching. Many of its princes were hesitating on which side to declare themselves; the Sikhs themselves, loyal till then, were wavering, for they said: "Cannot the British *raj* make head against the rebels of Delhi? Are they content that Delhi should be the refuge to which every rebellious regiment or native levy is running?"

What had been said of Peshawar a few weeks earlier could with equal justice have been said of Delhi, but in a contrary sense: "If the Ridge at Delhi was forsaken by the British and the town left to the rebels, all India would have been rolled up in rebellion." The whole of the Punjab would have risen, the hill tribes would have poured down from the mountains, and in the rising waves of storm which would have

swept from the Five Rivers to the Sunderbands, not a remnant of British rule would have survived.

Luckily, other men besides Nicholson were on the Ridge who knew that paltering would mean disaster, and at the council table in Wilson's tent they made their advice heard and saw that it was followed. Wilson pledged his word, and issued an order to the army, complimenting the men on the spirit they had shown hitherto, and warning them that the hardest part of their task was now to be performed.

A few days after the siege train arrived, the last of the reinforcements came in. The total forces now upon the Ridge amounted to just under 9000 men, but more than half of these were natives—Punjabis, Sikhs, Gurkhas. The weapon, therefore, with which the British *raj* was to attempt to break down the mutinous city was still largely composed of native troops, but they were natives who had been trained and treated properly, and while they found that their white comrades and leaders were men worthy to be followed they would not falter in their loyalty. The great test of the white men was now to be made.

CHAPTER XIII

THE FALL OF DELHI

IT was still not possible to besiege the city in the ordinary way, by blocking its gates and surrounding it by a ring of armed men. The only way in which the British could attempt to take it was to erect batteries as near to it as possible, and from those points to batter down the walls at certain places, in order to effect an entrance for the infantry, in whose hands, as ever in war, the final success or failure would lie.

During the night of the 7th September, the engineer officers marked out and began to build a battery 700 yards from a part of the city walls called the Moree Bastion. This battery was to command the bastion to the right and the Kashmir Gate to the left. As the men dug, sweating at their labour in the dark, strings of camels kept coming down loaded with materials for forming the defences of the batteries. As usual the camels kept up a perpetual grumbling and groaning, so that the men expected every moment that the enemy would hear from the walls and open fire upon the working party. Then the artillery carts trundled down, filled with shot and shell, and after that, each drawn by twenty bullocks, came the great siege guns.

Dawn was now breaking and the work was not done. Indeed, only one gun was in position, and the men worked feverishly to prepare the platforms for others. The gunners on the city walls poured shot and shell into the half-built battery, but nevertheless the work went on, and by midday the deep tones of the six guns rang out in answer to the cannon on the wall. Smash went the shots into the wall of the bastion, whence came the roar of the rebels' guns, and to eager eyes came the welcome sight of falling masonry and crumbling walls. The roar of the guns never ceased; eager hands served them, and fierce faces looked forth with grim delight and marked the process of ruin. By sunset the rebels' fire had died down; the Moree Bastion was a heap of stones, and the rebels' guns could be served no longer. The enemy was still firing heavily from the Kashmir Gate, but the guns in the left section of the battery held that in check, while the whole battery masked the real intentions of the British plans. The Moree Bastion was on the extreme right of the northern wall of the city, and the rebels believed that the attack was to be made only at this point.

Two more batteries were being made as quickly as hands could work—one not 500 yards in front of the Kashmir Gate to the left of the north wall, and another in a ruined house only 160 yards from the Water Bastion. A mortar battery was also thrown up in the thickets of the Koodsia

Gardens to batter down the wall between the Kashmir Gate and the Water Bastion. The work of making the battery in the grounds of the ruined house was particularly lively. The place was made the target of the full fire of the rebels as soon as the British plan was discovered, and the work of digging and piling was done by volunteers both of native and white soldiers. Every now and then a shot struck some soldier down, and his fellows merely paused to see whether the prone man was dead or only wounded, when, having placed him in a row with other dead or wounded, they resumed their work.

On the morning of the 11th September No. 2 battery opened fire. Nine guns were discharged at one stroke, and when the thick smoke cleared away fierce cheers broke forth from the gunners as they saw great pieces of the wall falling amid clouds of dust. In ten minutes the guns in the Kashmir Bastion were silenced; but the British battery still kept at its work of enlarging the breach. Not that the gunners did not suffer. From somewhere to the right of them a gun of the rebels would send round shot, now and then smashing from one end of the battery to the other, and the sepoy sharpshooters kept up a galling fire. But all through the day, caring nothing for the heat and regardless of their own losses, the gunners kept at their work.

On the 12th all the batteries were at work, and from one end of the northern wall to the other fifty

guns were belching forth ruin and death, making the earth to tremble and the air to quiver as they spoke.

In order to observe whether the result of their firing justified an assault being made on the city, two engineer officers, Medley and Lang, were detailed to go and examine the ditch and the breaches. Soon after sunset, escorted by six picked men, they went forward. It was a bright, clear night, with no moon, but the heavens were sown with stars; the only noise disturbing the stillness was the roar of the batteries and the clear, sharp reports of the shells from the mortars, while the sudden bursting into light of rockets and fireballs high in the air made a beautiful spectacle.

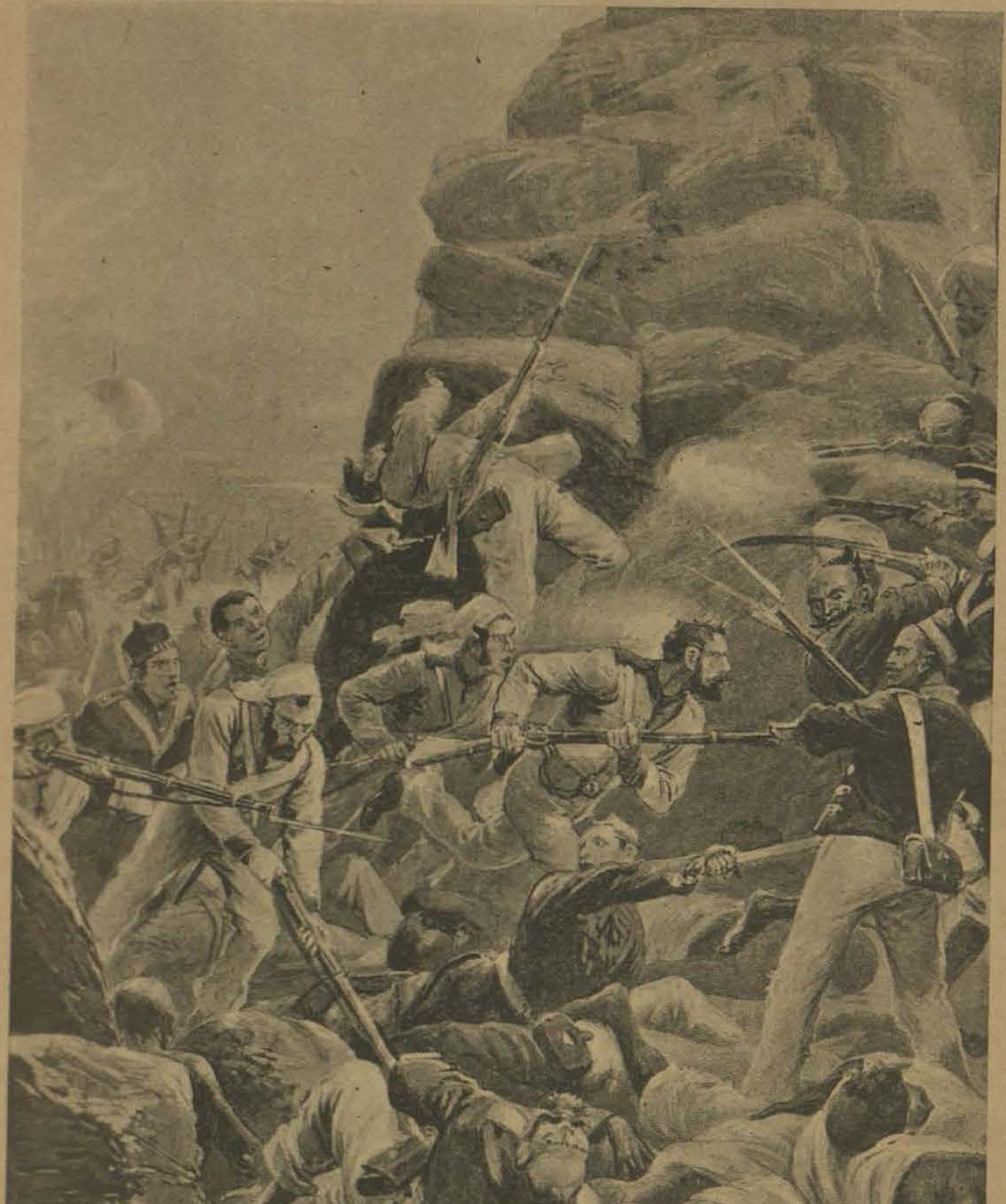
Suddenly, as the hour of ten struck, the guns ceased firing, and complete stillness swept down. Drawing their swords, the party left the shelter of the last picket and began to creep across the space toward the city. In five minutes they had reached the edge of the ditch, and saw on the other side the yawning breach made in the Kashmir Bastion. The officers and two men slid down into the ditch, which was sixteen feet deep, with the intention of climbing to the top of the breach. But the enemy was on the alert, and, quietly as the Europeans had proceeded, their presence had been detected. They heard footsteps running toward the breach, and therefore they reclimbed the ditch with a little difficulty and lay waiting, hoping the rebels would go back after a while.

Soon they saw the figures of men on the top of the

breach, peering here and there into the ditch; the sepoys spoke together, and then could be heard the clang of their ramrods as they pushed home charges in their muskets. The exploring party, however, lay in the deep shade and could not be seen. As they lay they could see all that was necessary—that the ascent to the breach was easy and that the ditch was easily crossed. At a signal, therefore, the whole party rose and ran back. Instantly the rebels fired a volley after them, but no one was hit.

It was arranged that the assault should be delivered at dawn, and every man looked eagerly forward to the great hour. They had much to avenge, for within the walls of that city were those whose hands had dealt death, torture, and mutilation to white women and little children, and whose eyes had gloated over the agonies of innocent wives, mothers, and sweethearts. A solemn and grim enthusiasm possessed all. In many tents the lesson for the day was read, and the chapter contained the strangely prophetic words from the book of Nahum: "Woe to the bloody city! it is all full of lies and robbery . . . draw thee waters for the siege, fortify thy strongholds . . . then shall the fire devour thee; the sword shall cut thee off, it shall eat thee up like the canker-worm."

The assault was to be made in four columns at four different points. Counting from the river, the gap near the Water Bastion was to be stormed by Fusiliers and Sikhs, under Brigadier Jones. The



The Storming of Delhi
A. Pearse

breach near the Cawnpore Bastion was to be assaulted by a thousand men led by Nicholson; the Cawnpore Gate itself was to be blown in by a column commanded by Campbell, while the last position to be stormed was a gap by the Lahore Gate, to which Major Reid was to lead his Guides and Gurkhas. A column of 1000 men was to be held in reserve under Brigadier Longfield. The whole forces were not to exceed 5000, while the rebel forces totalled ten times that number.

There was not much sleep in camp that night, for men were looking to their weapons, loading pistols and filling powder-flasks. A little after midnight all fell in, and by the light of a lantern the orders for the assault were given. The wounded were to be left where they fell, as there were no men to spare to care for them. If the assault succeeded they would be carried to hospital afterward; if it failed all should prepare for the worst. No quarter was to be given, but no women or children were to be hurt.

The attack was to have been delivered at three o'clock, but there was delay in some of the men coming up. As they stood in their ranks, quivering like dogs held in leash, the men cursed at the delay, wondering what and who caused it. Then the engineers found that the sepoys had filled up the breaches during the night with loose material, and the batteries had to reopen the gaps. Thus, while shot and shell shrieked through the air over their heads, the columns began to descend the Ridge. Then the darkness fell away, the

cool of the dawn blew in the faces of the soldiers, and the sun struck its glorious rays from over the eastern rim of the world. Instantly the guns ceased their roar and there was a deep silence. Each man gripped his rifle, saw that his bayonet was fixed, hitched his belt, and looked with straining face toward his leader.

The engineers moved forward with their ladders to the ditch. Nicholson went up to Brigadier Jones, and, placing his hand on his shoulder, asked if he was ready. The Brigadier replied that he was, and at a sign from Nicholson a quick, fierce cheer went up, and the men of the Rifles ran forward in skirmishing order to pick off the mutineers on the walls. Next moment the columns broke from cover and went forward swiftly. Instantly the blaze of death flashed from every gun and musket on the rebel walls. Men fell, but the others swept forward to the ditch, grimly unheeding the withering fire that tore gaps in their ranks.

The column under Nicholson was to assault the main breach by the Kashmir Bastion. Notwithstanding the terrible musketry fire Nicholson, followed by his men, slid down the counterscarp, and, mounting the ladders which had been thrown down before them, came to grips with the rebels behind the ruined wall. The dark figures, mad with rage, blazed at them with musket fire and threw great stones upon them. But in vain. The fierceness of the avengers was grimmer and more deadly than any Eastern fury and

would not be denied. A few moments of deadly struggle and the sepoys fled.

The second column, which was led by Jones, was received with so deadly a fire that thirty-one men out of the thirty-nine who formed the ladder party were shot down. But every Britisher and Sikh was a hero of heroes that day. They swept forward as if the falling bullets were raindrops. They, too, with stubborn fury climbed through the gap, bayoneting the sepoys who stayed, and then, seizing the guns, turned them on the flying sepoys themselves.

Pouring over the breach, one party of the British rushed to the right along the road below the wall, joined Nicholson's men at the Kashmir Bastion, and ran on to the Kashmir Gate, where they found the third column, whose entrance into the city forms one of the most daring and heroic exploits to be found in the annals of British pluck.

This column was preceded by a section of engineers commanded by Lieutenant Home. Their task was to place bags of gunpowder against the Kashmir Gate and blow it in. The members of the little party who were to attempt this daring feat had each his task appointed. The gate was one of strong proportions, and at the wicket stood some of the best sepoy marksmen. In front of the gate the ditch was spanned by the ruins of the wooden bridge, of which only the sleepers remained. Toward this, in face of a terrific fire, ran Lieutenant Home, accompanied by four

native soldiers, each carrying a bag of twenty-five pounds of powder. These Home placed at the foot of the great double-gate. The enemy were so astonished at the audacity of the action that, after a few uncertain shots, they closed the wicket. Profiting by this, Home and his party sprang down into the ditch to make way for the second firing party. This was formed by Lieutenant Salkeld and four more natives, with bags of powder and a lighted port-fire. By this time the sepoys had recovered from their astonishment, and from the top and flanks of the gateway and from the wicket a searching fire was poured into the little group of British and Sikhs. The bags were laid by Salkeld, who was instantly shot through the arm and leg. He handed the port-fire to Sapper Burgess, who attempted to light the fuse which would explode the charge, but he was shot dead in the act of doing this. Serjeant Carmichael ran forward and lit the fuse, but instantly fell dead. Another serjeant, named Smith, now dashed close up to the bags and struck a match, thinking the fuse had gone out. The fuse went off, however, and, jumping back, he turned and dived into the ditch, just as the thunder of explosion burst above him. He only escaped death from the falling masonry by clinging close to the wall.

Curiously enough the wicket was the only portion of the double-gate which was blown away, and through this the column under Campbell dashed, finding only one of the sepoys alive, the others having been killed

by the explosion. Nicholson and Campbell now joined forces, and quickly arranged a plan for penetrating farther and obtaining possession of the principal points of the city.

Campbell cleared several buildings round the Kashmir Gate of lurking sepoys, and sent a company to kill some rebels firing from the Water Bastion. He then advanced into the city, guided by Sir Theophilus Metcalfe, a former civilian of Delhi. The troops quickly made their way through the narrow streets to the Chandni Chowk, or Silver Street, possession of which in sufficient force would give them command of half the city. Here they found the sepoys holding the houses on each side of the Jamma Masjid, and as Campbell had neither cannon nor powder bags, he thought it best to retreat to the church, which lay near the Cawnpore Gate. He had hoped when he reached the Chandni Chowk to find that Nicholson's column had worked round into it from the east of the town by way of the Lahore Gate. But want of energy and initiative on the part of Brigadier Jones had resulted in a bad check to the British in this part, which in its turn brought about the death of Nicholson and cost many other valuable lives.

Jones had led his men along the city wall to the Moree Bastion, where the sepoy gunners had been bayoneted at their guns, fighting bravely to the last. Still pushing forward, Jones turned the north-west shoulder of the city wall, passed the Kabul Gate, and

then passed rapidly down a narrow lane, meeting with little opposition until he came to the Lahore Gate, which was the western entrance to the Chandni Chowk. The gate was not held by the sepoys in force, and with one firm rush he could have taken and held it. But either he was timid, or he felt he would be acting without orders, and he told his men to retreat to the Kabul Gate, which he occupied while waiting for Nicholson to come up. The golden opportunity was lost, for, very soon after this, into the Lahore Gate swept a thousand or more of rebels who had made a successful attack on the fourth column under Major Reid. When next the British were to try to advance down the narrow lane to the Lahore Gate, it was to be in the face of a tornado of withering fire.

It had been arranged that the fourth column under Major Reid should fight its way to the Lahore Gate, in the western wall, so as to support the other columns in their efforts to gain possession of the Chandni Chowk. Reid's column was to have been accompanied by guns. These arrived late, and so badly manned that Reid had to send for more gunners. Reid pushed on without waiting, however, and found the enemy in great force in Kissengunge, a suburb outside the Kabul Gate. Two breastworks had to be taken. The first was carried with a rush by the Gurkhas and the Rifles, but to take the second, guns were necessary. Crowds of sepoys were now pouring from the city, and a force of loyal Kashmir troops which Reid had sent forward

was thrown back on the main body, which instantly became involved in confusion.

At this moment Reid fell wounded, and there was some doubt as to who was then in command. Meanwhile sepoys on the bastions of the city wall were pouring a deadly musketry fire into the hesitating column, until Captain Muter of the Rifles took upon himself to order a general retirement, under cover of the guns from the nearest battery on the Ridge.

This was the most critical point of the whole affair. The victorious sepoys had only to send a sufficient force of cavalry and infantry in the rear of the columns who were entering the city to create a situation that might easily have ended in disaster for the British. Or they might have sent forward forces sufficient to attempt to capture the Ridge. These disastrous possibilities were instantly grasped by those in command of the reserve forces, and Brigadier Hope Grant moved down with his cavalry to the Moree Bastion to support the retiring column. So hot was the fire of the rebels from the houses and gardens of Kissengunge that Tombs and his horse artillery were ordered forward. What then happened can best be understood from the words of Hodson, who thus describes the fine exploit:

"In an instant horse artillery and cavalry were ordered to the front, and we went there at the gallop, bang through our own batteries, the gunners cheering us as we leapt over the sandbags, etc., and halted under

the Moree Bastion, under as heavy a fire of round shot, grape, and canister as I have ever been under in my life. Our artillery dashed to the front, unlimbered, and opened upon the enemy, and at it they both went, 'hammer and tongs.' Now, you must understand we had no infantry with us. All the infantry were fighting in the city. The rebels sent out large bodies of infantry and cavalry against us, and then began the fire of musketry. It was tremendous. There we were—9th Lancers, 1st, 2nd, 4th Sikhs, Guide Cavalry, and Hodson's Horse—protecting the artillery, who were threatened by their infantry and cavalry. And fancy what a pleasant position we were in, under this infernal fire, and never returning a shot. . . . For more than two hours we had to sit on our horses, without the chance of doing anything." Brigadier Hope Grant praised the men of the 9th Lancers for their coolness, and in reply the men on their horses replied, "We will stand here as long as you like, sir." As for Hodson himself, an officer states that he "sat like a man carved in stone, apparently as unconcerned as the sentries at the Horse Guards, and only by his eyes and his ready hand, whenever occasion offered, could you have told that he was in deadly peril, and the balls flying among us as thick as hail."

The loss of life was, of course, very great. Of the Lancers, forty-two men and six officers were killed, while in Tombs's troop exactly half were struck down. At length the enemy's guns having already been

silenced by Tombs's unceasing fire, some British infantry came and cleared out the rebels from the houses and gardens, and the cavalry—or what was left of them after this heroic stand—were able to retire.

Events of tragic moment were passing in the city. Jones still did not stir from the Kabul Bastion, but waited until Nicholson, his superior officer, should come up. An hour passed before this great leader arrived, as he had been compelled to deviate into the city to destroy some sepoys harassing his flank. By this time some thousands of the mutineers, who had gone out through the Lahore Gate to attack Reid, had returned, and seeing the Englishmen at the end of the narrow lane, beneath the wall running from the Lahore Gate to the Kabul Gate, they opened fire at them with cannon, beside filling the roofs and parapets of the houses on the side of the lane opposite the wall with sharpshooters. They also held in force the Burn Bastion, which was situated some way down the lane, and from this and the head of the lane itself they opened a galling fire.

When Nicholson came up with his column he determined to put an end to the annoyance and to seize the Lahore Gate. He therefore sent forward a party of the 1st Bengal Fusiliers, who, eager and grim, dashed up the lane in a perfect storm of bullets and grape shot. A brass gun had been manned by the sepoys half-way along the lane; this was quickly seized and the gunners who stayed were slain.

Another gun at the end of the lane near the Lahore Gate now sent its hail of shot into them, and this, added to the storm of shot issuing from the parapets and roofs of the houses, checked the British.

They were within ten yards of the second gun when the men hesitated, and, in spite of the appeals of their officers, they turned and ran back, leaving their dead on the road. One of their officers, named Lieutenant Butler, as if to shame them, still ran on, and being blinded by the white smoke in front of the second gun he dashed against the screen before it. Two sepoys thrust their bayonets through holes in the screen, hoping to impale him, but the gleaming weapons just escaped his body, which it held between them. Through a loophole Butler saw the triumphant faces of his foes, who twisted their bayonets gleefully, thinking they were fixed in the white man's body, and with his pistol he shot them both dead. Then, wonderfully escaping the shower of bullets, he ran back unharmed.

Again the officers called appealingly to their men to reform for another charge up the lane, and at length, headed by their heroic officers—Jacob, Speke, Greville, Wemyss, and Butler—they dashed into the inferno of fire. They reached the first gun again, which Greville now spiked, thus making it useless to the enemy. A hundred yards separated them from the second gun, but the space was filled with the rain of death. Without a halt the noble band of officers and men ran on, and with every yard an officer or a man sank down.

The fire was appalling. Jacob fell mortally wounded, and would not let his men bear him back.

"Go on," he said; "I am done for, but go on!"

Captain Speke and Captain Greville both fell; four other officers and many men were down. The grape shot tore through their ranks, musket balls came from above them, mingled with stones and other missiles. The men halted, hesitated, and turned back once more!

From the bottom of the lane Nicholson saw the two rushes made by his men, and saw also how deadly the hail of fire had been among officers and privates. When they turned back for the last time his fiery spirit, brooking no thought of defeat, urged him forward. He drew his sword and, running forward to them, he indignantly urged them to go back to make still another effort. But he was asking men to do more than men could do. Where the 1st Bengal Fusiliers—the 'dear old Dirty Shirts'—would not go, no other men would venture. The men kept silent and did not stir; while he, a figure of fierce passion and urgency, stood ahead of them, knowing, perhaps, that he was appealing in vain.

"Come on, men! Come on, you fools! Come on, you—you—"

What further contempt he would have poured upon them none will ever know, for as he was speaking a rebel was seen to lean from a house window near by and take deliberate aim. Next moment Nicholson staggered and fell.

Men bent over him, and at a glance knew that the wound was mortal. He was impatient of all sympathy, all offers to take him to the rear.

"Lay me under that tree!" he gasped. "I'll not leave till the lane is carried. Forward, men, forward! It can be done!"

A little later, perceiving doubtless that it was true what others said, that it was out of human power to carry the lane without the aid of artillery, he consented to be removed. Bearers were summoned, he was placed in a native litter and the men ordered to take him to the hospital on the Ridge. They went as far as the Kashmir Gate, then the unoccupied houses they passed, filled with loot and no one to say them nay, were a lure too great for the native bearers to withstand. What was John Nicholson to them—a wounded sahib more or less! A word or two passed between them, they placed the litter beside the road, and went off to plunder.

A few minutes later a young subaltern (afterward to be known as Earl Roberts of Kandahar) passing that way, opened the curtains of the litter, and with grief and consternation found it contained the great leader whom all white men loved and worshipped, forsaken by the roadside, with death written upon his haggard face.

CHAPTER XIV

THE EXPLOITS OF HODSON

WHEN the day was nearly ended the British found that they had won only the northern fringe of the city, from the river to the Kabul Gate, including the church, the college, and a few houses. All the more important places in the city itself—the Palace, the Chandni Chowk, the Mosque of Jamma Masjid, and the magazine—were in the hands of the rebels.

The British, by throwing up street barricades, loopholing the houses they held, and posting pickets, secured the portion they held, and toward evening Brigadier Wilson came from the Ridge to see what had been done. He rode through the captured portion with map in hand, and was greatly dissatisfied. The little ground won had been gained at a terrible loss of sixty-six officers and eleven hundred men, while the rebels were still in overwhelming force and were yet masters of four-fifths of the city. Wilson had never shown the character of a great leader, and now he peevishly wondered whether it would not be wiser to retire from further attempts upon the city, and to restrict the efforts of the army to holding the Ridge until fresh reinforcements came. Baird Smith, to

whom he confided his doubts, curtly replied that they must hold what they had won, and the matter having been reported to Nicholson, lying on his bed of death, he half-muttered to himself, "Thank God! I have still strength to shoot a traitor." In camp, when the suggestion got bruited abroad, it aroused a storm of anger.

The night passed without disturbance, and the dawn, which should have heralded a day of further brave effort and some firmer footing in the city, ushered in a day of shame instead. During the dark hours a strange change had taken place in the streets and houses immediately near the positions held by the British, for on the ground and in the empty houses were now strewn bottles of beer, wine, and spirits. The sepoys, knowing the weakness of the British soldier, had thus cunningly strewn temptation in his path. Nor was the temptation resisted. The soldiers rushed forth and, knocking off the necks of the bottles, begun a debauch which for many of them lasted all day, so that, lying helpless, they could have been butchered and the whole force swept out of the city if the sepoys had only possessed that which they lacked throughout the Mutiny—a leader of energy and resource. The officers did all that they could to dissuade the men from drinking, but they were out of hand; they had suffered a long and strenuous time before the city walls: this was their treat, now, and they ignored all advice, all commands. For that

day, the 14th of September, the army of occupation hardly existed, except for the anxious officers, who kept guard themselves. At last Wilson sent in other men, who, going from place to place, smashed every bottle which remained in sight.

Next day work was continued. Batteries were erected and fire was kept up on the chief positions held by the enemy. The deadly lane leading to the Lahore Gate was left alone; instead of attempting another frontal attack, the engineers hit on the plan of cutting through the walls of the houses on one side of it held by the rebels. Slowly the passage was made through house after house, the sepoys in each being bayoneted after a furious struggle, and so, with some losses, at length the guns were brought up and trained upon the Burn Bastion and the Lahore Gate, whereupon, after a slight resistance, the rebels fled from these positions.

Similar sapping operations were carried on in other directions, while the sepoys kept up an incessant cannonade against our positions. On the 16th the magazine which Willoughby had blown up was carried after its walls had been breached, and the rebels within it were put to the sword. It was now found that the heroic Willoughby had not wholly succeeded in his attempt to destroy all the munitions of war under his charge. One hundred and seventy-one guns, with a large store of ammunition, were found to be still intact. By this time the rebels were leaking

away from the city, and resistance was dying down.

On the 20th the British gained possession of Chandni Chowk, after seizing the Lahore Gate, and thereupon they carried the Delhi Bank and blew in the doors of the Jamma Masjid. After that the city was practically wholly taken, the only place still holding out being the Great Palace.

Between the palace and the bridge of boats, which led from the city, was a strong work called the Selimgarh. Believing that the King and his courtiers were still in the palace, Lieutenant Aikman, with a handful of Sikhs, was dispatched to make a dash upon the Selimgarh so as to intercept the King. It was a daring piece of work, seeing that every one believed that both the Selimgarh and the palace were filled with sepoys, but with a fierce rush Lieutenant Aikman carried the passage leading to the fortress, and then, blowing in the doors of the latter building, they captured every one who remained in its warren of dark rooms and involved corridors. The British found, however, that the prize they were looking for had already fled.

Immediately after the capture of the palace, the British flag blew out upon its topmost pinnacle, and a salvo of artillery boomed its note through the city and the vicinity, announcing to all that the proud City of the Moguls was once more in the hands of its white masters, and that the chief focus and rallying-place of mutiny in India was no more.

The same day Brigadier Wilson moved in from the Ridge and established his headquarters in the famous audience chamber of the Mogul, the Dewan-i-Khas. Hither came Hodson to him and told him that a spy of his, Rujub Ali, had come to him and informed him that the King left the city with his court as soon as the Lahore Gate had been carried, and that he was now at the Tomb of the Emperor Humayun, six miles south of Delhi, beyond the ruined walls and gardens of Old Delhi.

Hodson tried to persuade Wilson that the capture of the King was absolutely necessary to make the defeat of the rebels complete, and that if the King were allowed to go free, mutiny and rebellion would still have a centre round which to gather. He therefore asked the Brigadier to let him take some of the troopers of Hodson's Horse and capture the King. Wilson would not consent at first: he did not want to be bothered with the King, he had no troops to spare, and he made other excuses to prevent being troubled with the matter. But Neville Chamberlain urged that what Hodson proposed should be done, and Nicholson, still slowly dying, added his advice to the same purport. Wilson reluctantly gave way, giving Hodson permission to take the King alive, but stating that he would not be responsible if disaster overtook the attempt.

Taking fifty of his troopers, Hodson rode forth. As they approached the great white tomb, over which

a magnificent dome of white marble lifted its bubble-like form into the blue of the skies, many fierce eyes observed them, for the tomb and its neighbourhood were packed with thousands of rebels and courtiers. But the indifferent and masterful air of the leading rider impressed all with the thought that this man represented the power of the British *raj*, which again had shown that when it chose to put forth its strength it was as irresistible as fate. Therefore not a shot was fired, not a hostile gesture was made as the party rode up to the beautiful gateway.

Hodson posted his men so as to block up all points, and riding up to the gateway he demanded of the scowling men waiting there that they should carry a message to their King, to the effect that he should deliver himself up to the British, on the sole condition that his life should be spared. The message was carried by unwilling messengers to the old King, who sat, the last of the mighty line of Timour the Tartar, trembling and fearful, in one of the rooms of the shrine, surrounded by his courtiers and accompanied by his favourite wife, Zeenat Maihl, who had been one of the chief plotters in the conspiracy to overthrow the British *raj*.

For two hours Hodson sat on his horse with unconcerned air, while the councillors of the King made up their own minds and his. Many messages were sent to and from the stern Englishman at the gate, but he was adamant in this, that he would give no

other condition than that the King should not be slain. One may imagine the feverish excitement swaying the dark-skinned, fierce-eyed natives swarming about the tomb in sight of this one hard-faced Englishman, backed by his slender line of troopers. Should they not draw a thousand swords and hack these *Feringees*, these heathen, to pieces? Nay, nay, to what end, brother? Would it help us, would it save the King? Is not the white sahib lord of India again? We should perish before the wrath of the British like young grass before the fire of the noonday sun.

So at last the King came to his decision: he would give himself up if the Sahib Hodson would, with his own lips, swear to him that his life would not be taken. Hodson promised to do this. A little while, and out of the black gulf of the mausoleum streamed crowds of natives, sullen faced, angry eyed, and in their midst came a litter, bearing the Begum and her son. Then in a *palkee* drawn by bullocks came the King.

Hodson rode up and in a stern voice demanded the arms of the old man. The King looked up and said:

"Are you Hodson Bahadur?"

Hodson replied that he was. Thereupon the King asked him to confirm the guarantee which the messengers had given.

"I promise that your life shall be safe," replied Hodson; "but," he added sternly, looking round

upon the sea of fierce, dark faces looking up at him, "if any attempt is made at a rescue I will shoot the King without mercy."

Then, broken in spirit, in the shadow of the tomb of one of his greatest ancestors, the King of Delhi gave up his arms to the English subaltern. A sigh passed through the great crowds, for the surrender of the weapons was the sign that all hope was shattered, and that the glorious hopes of sovereignty were ended.

The six miles back to Delhi were the longest six miles that Hodson had ever ridden. The *palkee* could, of course, only proceed at a walking pace, while round about Hodson and his fifty dark troopers were thousands of passionate adherents of the King, who, by a concerted action, could have shot down every one of those who were taking the King captive. Hodson's orderly has placed it on record that his leader's calm and undaunted bearing had a strangely dominating effect on the crowd, and that during the whole of the long slow walk no attempt was made to work up a hostile demonstration.

The nearer they got to the Lahore Gate the smaller became the crowd about the King and his captors, and very few were with them when the troopers reached the guard at the gate.

"What have you got in that *palkee*?" asked the officer on duty of Hodson.

"Only the King of Delhi!" replied Hodson, with

the touch of bravado that was never long absent from him.

The guard, astonished at the hardihood which had brought off this achievement, would have cheered lustily but their officers restrained them. Hodson took his prisoners and lodged them in the palace, and on reporting what he had done to Brigadier Wilson, that general replied, "Well, I'm glad you've got him, but I never expected to see you again."

This achievement of Hodson's, intrepid as it was, was followed by one still more daring, and still more tragic. He resolved to capture the three princes who had been prime movers of the mutiny at Delhi, and chief murderers in the massacre of white and Eurasian women and children. These were Mirza Moghul, who had been the King's Commander-in-chief, Mirza Khejoo Sultan, and Mirza Abul Bukr. It was only with difficulty, again, that Hodson obtained permission to make the attempt at capture, but once more his request was backed by the vehement words of the dying Nicholson, and Hodson sent word on the morning of Sept. 21st to his second in command, Macdowell, to "come quick and bring a hundred men."

When Macdowell came as ordered, Hodson said:

"Come along; we're going to bring in those brutes the princes. They're at Humayun's Tomb."

The wild-looking troop trotted out of Delhi once more, looking the very embodiment of reckless and picturesque warriors. All wore scarlet turbans, and

tunics of dust-coloured cloth bound with scarlet sashes. Hodson, tall and thin, with flowing beard, and dressed in the same garb, rode before them, his keen, insolent eyes taking in everything about him.

When they arrived at the tomb, the troopers were posted so as to surround the building, and then Hodson sent in two of his assistants, or spies, who had aided him in his work as Head of the Intelligence Department. These were Mirza Elahee Buksh and Rujub Ali. By these he sent a message which was recklessly bold, in view of the fact that the tomb, as on the previous day, was filled with crowds of furious adherents of the King's party. It was to the effect that he had come to take the princes away for their punishment, and was determined to seize them, dead or alive.

A message was sent out to Hodson asking that at least they should be guaranteed their lives, to which Hodson curtly replied, "Certainly not!"

For half an hour Hodson and Macdowell sat on their horses wondering whether the princes would ever come. Suddenly they heard the angry roar of many voices, fierce shoutings, and vehement appeals: it was the cry of the Moslems, asking their princes to lead them against the heathen *Feringees* waiting outside.

At length a messenger came out to say that the princes were coming, and in a little while a small bullock cart came forth in which, sullen and scared, sat the three princes. Ten troopers instantly closed

around them to prevent any attempt at a rescue. Again they begged Hodson to guarantee their lives, but again the man with the scornful eyes and the contemptuous lips curtly replied, "Most certainly not!"

Hodson then ordered the driver of the bullock cart to go on, and the huge crowd began to follow. The Englishman imperiously waved them back, and with a few curt words he formed up most of his troop between the cart and the crowd, and pressed the latter back into the enclosure about the tomb. Then, swiftly riding forward to the troopers around the cart, he ordered them to hasten to the city, while he and the others dealt with the mob.

Rejoining his lieutenant, Hodson found the mob streaming up the steps into the garden of the tomb. Hodson followed them with but four men, and, standing on the top step, with a loud voice he ordered the crowd to lay down their arms! There was a murmur from the 6000 Moslems whom this handful of British soldiers faced. Hodson repeated his command with greater imperiousness—and the crowd laid down its weapons.

As a matter of fact, the white men did not want the arms. All they wanted was to gain time for the princes to reach the city, since Hodson and his troopers would have been powerless had the mob attacked them. The troopers were ordered to collect the arms and pile them in a bullock cart. The process took some

time, of course, during which Macdowell smoked as if unconcerned, though he thought every moment that the angry-looking crowd about him would rush upon and overwhelm them.

When all the arms had been collected and piled in the bullock cart, which was sent forward, Hodson formed up his troop and slowly departed, the crowd following. "Well, Mac," said Hodson, as they went along, "we've got 'em at last," and both heaved a sigh of relief. Perhaps neither of them had been in such a tight corner before, and both felt thankful to have got out of it without disaster.

The two quickly overtook the cart with the princes, but they were only just in time. A crowd surged about the troopers, threatening with looks and words, and pressing on the horses. "What shall we do with them?" said Hodson, seeing how ugly the position looked. He answered his own question.

"I think we had better shoot them here," he said; "we shall never get them in."

A quick word of command and his troop had halted; then, placing horsemen across the road, so that the crowd was pressed back on both sides, he curtly ordered the princes to strip their upper garments. Then, in a loud voice, he explained to his troopers and the crowd that these princes had ordered the murder of white women and little children, and had slain some with their own hands. For these deeds they deserved death. Taking a carbine from the hand of one of his

troopers, he then shot first the two elder princes, Mirza Moghul and Mirza Khejoo Sultan. The third was the nephew of the others. Leaping from the cart he crawled on the ground, praying for mercy. But there was no mercy in Hodson's heart, only exultation at the opportunity of ridding the earth of such wretches. Crack! went the carbine again, and Abul Bukr, a mere lad in age, lay along the ground dead.

The crowd shuddered to see the deed done, but none raised hand or voice. Hodson ordered the bodies to be carted away and flung out in front of the *Kotwallee*, or police station, for all passers-by to see. The Sikhs composing his troops shouted with exultation, while the crowd behind them melted away in awed silence.

The Sikhs followed the dead princes gleefully, and hastening to the spot indicated by Hodson they threw out the bodies and gloated over the significance of the fact, and spoke to each other of the prophecy that the white sahib, all unknowingly, had fulfilled. Two hundred years before there had lived the great ancestor of these dead princes, the proud and fanatical King Aurungzebe, a Moslem who hated all other religions. He had caught a great prophet of the Sikh nation, revered by all, named Jey Bahadoor Khan, had cut off his head, and had thrown his body by the wayside at this very spot. Ever since that deed was done a prophecy had existed that at some remote time the Sikhs would reconquer the city of the hated Moslem

by the aid of the strange white men. Now here was retribution for their race, and the prophecy was fulfilled. Here were the bodies of the last princes of the hated house of Timour and Aurungzebe, to be spat upon by the wayfarer.

The fame of Hodson, for this act of wild justice and retribution, rose high in the estimation of all the Sikh soldiers in our army, and Hodson received congratulations on all sides. Others, however, condemned his action as one that was quite unjustified, seeing that, however evil had been the actions of the princes, he was not the man to judge them. He should have brought them into Delhi to stand a fair trial, not shot them in cold blood. That he had little to fear from an unarmed mob is evident, and as he had overawed 6000 natives at the tomb, he could easily have beaten back the crowd around the cart. In fine, his slaying of the princes, by those who think as above indicated, is stigmatized as an outrage against humanity.

Meanwhile John Nicholson was dying, and his death on the 23rd struck heavily at the heart of every British soldier, whose grief, unfeigned, was deep and stern and worthy of the man they mourned. He was only thirty-seven when he died, but he had made a name by the possession of the finest quality of a soldier: the art of attaching men to him, and of winning their whole-hearted devotion. To this must be added his instinctive genius for battle, and his fierce per-

sistence and determination. It is related that when the fakirs in Hazara, who had taken him for their divinity, heard of his death "they came together to lament, and one of them stood forth and said there was no gain from living in a world that no longer held Nikkul Seyn. So he cut his throat deliberately and died." The others, however, reflected that the best way they could continue to show their devotion to their great hero was to embrace the religion which he had loved, and the whole party forthwith became Christians.

Legends and traditions concerning his achievements in the rocky and mountainous wilds of the frontier still persist among the lawless tribesmen of Margalla and Hazara, whose ancestors feared and revered him.

On stormy nights, sitting in their dark huts and tents, they listen to the storm and say that the hoofs of the war-horse of Nikkul Seyn still echo up the dreary pass; and while those phantom footsteps shall be heard, the empire of the white men will endure.

CHAPTER XV

CAWNPORE

FOR some days after the outbreak of mutiny its terrible seriousness was not appreciated by Lord Canning, the Governor-General, and his circle of advisers at Calcutta. Canning himself was quite new to the country, while his councillors, though they had spent most of their lives in the service of the East India Company, were men who had never learned anything of native ways of thinking and feeling. The 'black men' whom they had ruled were beings of quite inferior nature whom it was only necessary to 'govern,' not to understand.

These men looked upon the disastrous event at Meerut merely as a military 'row,' which would soon be put down. They ignored Sir Henry Lawrence's appeal, sent to them before he heard of the outbreak at Meerut, stating that, from knowledge gained in cross-examining some of his own men at Lucknow, he was convinced that "the whole regular army was ready to break out." To his advice to send for troops from Persia, where a punitive expedition had just finished its work, and to intercept troops going to China, the men at Calcutta turned a deaf ear.

Not until the middle of May did Canning realize

that the sepoys were revolting. Then he put into action the advice of Sir Henry Lawrence, and sent to Ceylon, Mauritius, and Madras for regiments of white troops. One of the first to arrive in answer to this urgent call were the Madras Fusiliers, commanded by Colonel James Neill, a born ruler of men, and a soldier who hated paltering with mutiny and disorder.

Further news of tragic import had come in: Delhi was in the hands of the rebels, and many white men, women, and children had been slaughtered. Other stations, as weakly guarded by white soldiers, or wholly at the mercy of native troops, were threatened—among them, Benares, Allahabad, and Cawnpore. It was imperative that British soldiers should push forward up the trunk road to the north-west to relieve these stations, and to show the sepoys who were trembling on the verge of mutiny that British arms were still strong to punish rebels and murderers. Already, indeed, the sepoy garrisons at many places were rejoicing at the news from Delhi.

Neill was ordered to rush up his Fusiliers—his 'Lambs,' as they were termed—as quickly as possible to Benares, which was some 400 miles from Calcutta. In those days the railways of India were few, and most travelling had to be done either by ox-cart or, where possible, by water. It was arranged that a certain part of the Fusiliers should proceed by steamer up the Ganges to Benares, while Neill himself with the remainder should go by train as far as the

railway was then laid. It was on the evening of May 23rd that Neill and his men reached the station, a little late owing to unforeseen difficulty. The station-master, angry and pompous, informed the Colonel that the train was already late, and that he could not give him more than three minutes to get his soldiers aboard. Neill remonstrated, but his objections were drowned by the objurgations and remarks of other railway officials.

Neill turned to his men and curtly ordered a serjeant and several soldiers to take charge of the station-master. That worthy called his officials to his aid, but in a few moments, engine-driver, stoker, and guard were in a like predicament. Then Neill calmly looked to the entraining of his men, and did not release his prisoners until all was ready for the departure of the train.

Arriving at Benares on the 3rd June, Neill found that the sepoys were on the verge of mutiny. Brigadier Ponsonby, commanding the station, was convinced of the need of disarming the soldiers, but funked the work and wished to put it off till next day. Colonel Neill got him to decide on disarming the men at once. Ponsonby thereupon had the troops paraded, but the process of disarming was bungled; loyal Sikhs were somehow persuaded to turn on their officers, and Ponsonby, with the confusion and the heat of the sun, suddenly became incapable. Neill went up to him, "General, I assume command," he said; and after

the mutineers had fled Neill in a swift pursuit routed them completely.

Thereafter, by summary trials and ceaseless hangings of rebels, both sepoys and native civilians, and by indiscriminate and, too often, unjustifiable slaughter of villagers and firing of native hamlets, Neill imposed the terror of the British name in the minds of the inhabitants, and thus 'pacified' the district to some extent.

The circumstances of the revolt at Allahabad, where Neill arrived on the 11th June, have already been related. Here also, by ruthless execution of rebels and malcontents, robbers and dacoits, by burning villages and slaying natives on sight, the British leader again inspired those that survived with respect for law and order. Neill did all these things in the spirit of one of his covenanting ancestors, to whom the putting to death of a few opponents was an act of well-doing. Yet even he seems to have had some doubt as to the rectitude of his doings. "God grant that I may have acted with justice," he wrote in his diary. "I know I have with severity, but, under all the circumstances, I trust for forgiveness."

Two-thirds of the task committed to him were now achieved. He had made his name a name of terror along the banks of the Ganges, and had thereby re-established British authority throughout a wide area. But Cawnpore was hard pressed by the mutineers, and he was almost helpless to attempt its succour. The

superhuman efforts of the past few days under a burning sun, heavy forced marches, ceaseless effort and incessant fighting, had almost worn him out. Cholera also had broken out among his troops, weakened by their toils and privations, their meagre and poor food, and their excessive drinking. It was necessary to rest for some days in order to recuperate and to refit, and to allow time for reinforcements to come up. Then he would push on to succour those in deadly peril at Cawnpore.

We will now describe the tragic and terrible events which were happening in that city, events which will for ever endow the name of Cawnpore with some of the saddest memories in the history of human suffering and endurance.

Cawnpore was a large and important station, some 42 miles south-west of Lucknow, and 125 miles north-west of Allahabad. It was the centre of a large district, but its value as a military station had been lessened since the Punjab had been annexed. It was guarded by four native regiments—the 2nd Cavalry, and the 1st, 53rd, and 56th Infantry. Its white troops amounted to 59 artillerymen, in whose charge were six guns, and a few invalids of the 32nd Queen's Regiment.

The officer commanding the station was General Sir Hugh Wheeler, who, though an old man, was a brave and resolute soldier, knowing and loving the sepoy, whose confidence and esteem he was supposed

to possess in the strongest degree. Nevertheless, as events showed, he was not blind to the faults of the sepoys, one of whose dusky daughters he had chosen for his wife; his only fault was in not possessing the daring and the quickness of decision which a younger commander might more probably have possessed.

The conditions in Cawnpore during those early days of May were those which ruled in hundreds of stations up and down India, where a handful of the ruling white race, with their women and children, spent their lives in the daily routine of business or pleasure in the midst of a vast sea of alien people whose thoughts and emotions they did not guess at and whom, indeed, they generally despised too much to have any wish to know intimately. The bright days were passing; the wives of officers and officials, of civilians and merchants, each in their little set, met and chatted, gossiped and small-talked; there were morning rides, work in office or on parade, questions of prices of indigo, wheat, or flour to discuss among the traders, of hunting trips or promotions among the military men. The bands played in the park at sunset, and men and women flirted under the coloured lamps in the dusk; there was merry laughter under the lights at the bright dinner-table; and the white children played and chattered and said their prayers in their nurseries night after night.

On the 14th May strange rumours dropped into the careless current of this pleasant monotonous life, and

people's faces became a little serious. Guns had been heard all night on the 10th. Then people whispered that something strange had happened at Meerut: the sepoys had broken out of bounds, had fired on their officers and, it was said, had fled to Delhi and slaughtered every white person there. It was incredible—at Meerut of all places, where white troops were plentiful. It was surely a fiction, which would quickly be denied.

A few days later into the life of the place came a figure of dreadful tragedy, who confirmed all the vague fears in women's hearts. This was Mrs Fraser, a survivor from Delhi, whose husband had been murdered at the palace and who, under the guidance of a faithful native, had travelled the long 266 miles in safety, only to fall into the webs of a fate more terrible than Delhi's.

In the lines of the sepoys at Cawnpore the good news had come quickly by the devious and swift avenues known only to the 'whispering gallery' of the East. Strange tales began to fly about there. The son of a sepoy soldier boasted to his friends that he knew what was to be done by his father's regiment "for the good cause." A soldier told the monstrous tale of an intended plot by the British to blow up all the native regiments on the 5th of June. The fiction was even scouted by his fellow infantrymen, who carried it to their officers. These, secure in their British sense of superiority, merely told the men that the tale was false, and took no steps to secure the

romancer who was spreading the story, until the excitement spread to the cavalry lines. So great was the fear and rage excited by the monstrous lie among the cavalrymen, that Sir Hugh Wheeler clapped the native soldier in jail, and wired to Sir Henry Lawrence at Lucknow for white troops to aid in overawing the sepoys, some of whom showed signs of truculence.

A few miles outside Cawnpore was situated the town of Bithoor, where there lived the representative of one of the great Mahratta kings who in earlier days had possessed sovereignty over wide lands immediately about Cawnpore. This was Seereek Dhoondoo Poonth, more familiarly known as Nana Sahib, or the Nana. By birth he was said to be the son of a corn merchant, but he had attracted the attention of Bajee Rao, the descendant of the great Mahratta line of kings whose lands the East India Company had annexed, and became the adopted son of his benefactor. On the death of Bajee Rao, the Nana claimed the pension of eighty thousand pounds which John Company had paid his predecessor, but the claim was disallowed. After that the Nana was outwardly still the plausible friend of the British, but in his heart he was their bitterest enemy. He was still rich, for he had obtained, by fair means and foul, all the wealth of his deceased benefactor; and his palace at Bithoor became the centre of tales of mystery and iniquity. He gave balls and banquets lavishly to the British officers and officials and their wives, treated all with courtesy, and

showed kindly interest in all. Most people liked him, and the authorities looked upon him as a loyal friend of the Government, in whose good faith implicit confidence could be reposed.

But the affront which the British had placed upon him by rejecting his claim to the pension was for ever rankling in his mind. Pride and disappointed greed were the mainsprings of the hatred which he bore against the white men, with whom he chatted over the billiard-table or the well-cooked dinner, and many of those who carelessly laughed with and at him were those who, both men and women, were to remember in the hour of agony that the man who had ordered their painful death was the same who, lolling at his table, had masked the thoughts of dreadful vengeance with easy bantering or genial gossip.

General Wheeler was one of those who imposed implicit faith in this man, and in spite of remonstrances from keener-minded officials about him, he accepted from the Nana the assistance of two guns and 300 men, cavalry, and infantry, in whose custody the treasury of the station, containing upward of a hundred thousand pounds, was placed. Meanwhile, fearing that mutiny might break bounds at any time, Wheeler looked about for a suitable position in which he could guard the white people under his care, until such time as reinforcements came up from Calcutta.

There was one strong position to which every consideration pointed as the one place which should be

chosen. This was the magazine, a well-built structure with shot-proof walls and vast stores of guns and ammunition. This was guarded by a company of sepoy native infantry, and the excuse which Wheeler gave for not taking possession of this place was that the guard would believe that he suspected their loyalty, and mutiny would instantly break out. He believed that if the regiments did indeed revolt, they would depart *en masse* to swell the rebels at Delhi, and that therefore any place of defence he chose would only have to be guarded against the disorderly mob of hooligans left behind. A fatal error in foreseeing possibilities, which was to cost his own and many other lives committed to his care.

He passed by the strong walls of the magazine and chose a spot on the outskirts of the straggling city, in the midst of an open, sandy plain with but a meagre water-supply. Here he commanded that earthworks should be thrown up, but the soil was parched and hard, and when the walls were raised they were not strong enough to resist the crash of a round shot, and their height was such that it was said an active cow could easily leap them. In the centre of this entrenchment was an old hospital, and not far off, but outside the walls, were the half-built structures of a barracks. The latter were not made use of by Wheeler in the scheme of his defence, nor were they pulled down, so that they stood to shelter any force to be brought against him.

While these preparations were being made in a very dilatory fashion, the right-hand man of Nana Sahib, a native named Azimoolah, happened one day to be walking with an English lieutenant. He pointed to the mud walls then being slowly raised on the sun-burnt plain.

"What do you call that place you are building out there?" he asked.

"I'm sure I don't know," was the reply.

"I suggest you should call it the 'Fort of Despair,'" said the native.

"No, no," replied the Englishman; "we will call it the 'Fort of Victory.'"

Wheeler had telegraphed to Lucknow for reinforcements, and these were supplied to the number of fifty men of the 52nd and a half battery of guns. With these he could easily have overawed his sepoys and seized the magazine, but the opportunity was not even thought of, yet in the minds of the sepoys, faithful and mutinous alike, the sight of the worthless defences in the plain was proof enough that the sahibs had lost all confidence in their native troops.

Now ensued a period of terrible suspense. Just as men living over ground that they know is mined await with stern patience the explosion that shall end them, so the white people at Cawnpore went about their business and their pleasures waiting grimly for the end. The women and children were transferred to the entrenchments, which were now protected by ten guns,

while their husbands and fathers, sweethearts and sons slept in tents in the midst of the sepoy lines if they were officers, or in their houses if they were officials or merchants.

A serjeant's wife, making purchases in the bazaar, was accosted by a military-looking native who, with triumph in voice and eyes, said :

" Ah, you will none of you come here many more times. In a week you will all be dead ! "

The last mail was going out and bore letters with such brave sad words as these : " I do not wish to write gloomily, but there is no use in disguising the fact that we are in the utmost danger ; and, as I have said, if the troops do mutiny, my life must almost certainly be sacrificed ; but I do not think they will venture to attack the entrenched position which is held by the European troops, so I hope in God that my wife and child will be saved."

And these, written by the wife mentioned in the above lines : " It is not hard to die oneself, but to see a dear child suffer and perish, that is the hard, the bitter trial, and the cup which I must drink, should God not deem it fit that it should pass from me. My companion, Mrs Hillersdon, is delightful. Poor young thing, she has such a gentle spirit, so unmurmuring, so desirous to meet the trial rightly, unselfish and sweet in every way. She has two children, and we feel that our duty to our little ones demands that we should exert ourselves to keep up health and spirits

as much as possible. . . . Such nights of anxiety I would never have believed possible, and the days are full of excitement. Another fortnight, we expect, will decide our fate; and whatever it may be I trust we shall be able to bear it. If these are my last words to you, you will remember them lovingly, and always bear in mind that your affection and the love we have had for each other is an ingredient of comfort in these bitter times."

During these days a faithful native lawyer gave warning to the English magistrate that there were many secret meetings between certain disloyal men of the 2nd Cavalry and Azimoolah, the steward of the Nana, and the Nana himself, which portended conspiracy; but the magistrate, blind to any signs of the fatality that was hourly nearing himself and his people, gave no heed, and was angry with the man for suggesting such discredit against the Maharajah of Bithoor.

Signs of the increasing disloyalty of the sepoys began to multiply. Then, one day, the corpses of an English lady and gentleman, floating down from some station upstream where they had been murdered, turned aside into the canal which ran through Cawnpore, to bring the most shocking portent to the anxious watchers, of the terrors that every moment were coming nearer to themselves.

At length, on the 4th June, the men of the 2nd Cavalry rose, seized the treasury at Nawabgunge, and

got the 53rd Infantry to throw in their lot with them. For that day the white people felt they were comparatively safe, for the sepoys having fled, every one believed that they had betaken themselves to Delhi, to swell the hordes of mutineers who had flocked to the flag of Bahadur Khan, the representative of the ancient Mogul sovereignty of Timour. The officers and other white men began to make preparations to seek with their families some place of safety, and with this end they filled boats with food and goods with the idea of going down stream to safer stations.

The mutineers who had plundered the treasury shared between themselves money to the value of nearly a hundred thousand pounds, after which they gave themselves up to plunder and destruction. The jails were broken open, bungalows gutted and burnt, and after having thus sated themselves, the sepoys packed themselves, their booty, their children and their numerous female relatives in carts, and began their advance to Delhi, halting at Kullianpore, a short distance on the road.

Some of the sepoys had previously requested the Nana to lead them to Delhi, and he had consented to this course, but after a time Azimoolah and other friends had advised him to the contrary, urging that if he went to Delhi his personality would be obscured by the greater power of the King. If, on the other hand, he kept sufficient forces at Cawnpore he could make himself master of that district, and could then

bargain with the rebels throughout India, and placing himself at their head he would be able to sweep through the valley of the Ganges, and in a little while, having murdered all the heathen sahibs and their womenfolk, become monarch of all India.

Fired with these dreams, the Nana and his advisers rode out to the mutineers at Kullianpore, and, by promises of unlimited pillage, persuaded them to come back to Cawnpore.

On the morning of the 6th June Sir Hugh Wheeler was handed a letter from the Nana, in which the latter gave notice that he would at once commence an attack on the white quarter. Instantly there were swift preparations on the part of the British; officers and men, officials and merchants hastened, breakfastless and half-dressed, into the entrenchment, which they were too soon to find was a place which gave every advantage to their enemies and yielded little or no protection to themselves. Some eighty sepoys still remained faithful to their white masters, and with them entered the fatal earthworks. The curtain had now rung up on the first scene in the tragedy of Cawnpore.

CHAPTER XVI

THE THREE WEEKS' AGONY

WITHIN the walls of the slender earthworks erected by the orders of Sir Hugh Wheeler a thousand souls were huddled, 465 of whom were men—officers and privates of the army, civil officials, merchants, and clerks. Their wives and grown daughters numbered about 280, and there were as many children.

The only protection within the mud walls were two houses, slenderly built of thin bricks, not proof against the midday heat of the Indian sun. One was thatched with straw, the other roofed with concrete, both, indeed, capable of being knocked into ruins by a few well-directed round shot. What madness of incapacity had chosen this place as a harbour of refuge for a thousand precious souls in a weltering sea of murderous rebels!

Even while the military officers were choosing their men to man the guns, the roar of the mutineers' artillery rent the air, and round shot from a battery dashed and hopped into the little camp, to the accompaniment of shrieks and cries from the women and children. Soldiers and civilians, all who could bear arms, were given rifles and each was assigned a post at

the walls under an officer who commanded the guns at each spot. The women were placed in the hospital buildings, and already began to care for the cooking, to tear up clothing for bandages for the wounded who would soon come to them for relief and solace, and to create what comfort was possible for the little children whose dreadful fate it was to spend the remaining fragment of their tiny lives in this place of terror and death.

As a preliminary to the easy destruction of the handful of heathen sahibs and their women out there in the flimsy entrenchment, Nana Sahib gave his men liberty to plunder the English quarter in the town and to punish all native householders who had sheltered white folk. Thus they spread through the city, burning and plundering, ferreting out English people or Eurasians, or natives whom they thought were still loyal. Dashing up and down the narrow lanes, in and out of the gardens, the troopers of the 2nd Cavalry chased such men and women as they could find and put them to the sword, and the riff-raff of the town, with dagger or *tulwar* or pistol, helped in the sport.

The result of the unequal struggle at Cawnpore was foredoomed from the commencement. The numbers of the besieging army exceeded 3000 soldiers, who had been trained and armed by the men whom now they were to attempt to destroy; the sepoys had almost illimitable stores of ammunition

and weapons, besides food in abundance, and the support of most of the population of Cawnpore. The besieged British, on the other hand, though possessing a good store of muskets and ammunition, only mustered 400 fighting men, and as to food, though orders had been given to lay in sufficient for twenty-five days, the native contractors had fobbed off insufficient supplies, consisting mainly of peas and flour. This, with the slight addition of some luxuries in the shape of tins of preserved meat, was all the food on which the besieged could rely. The water-supply consisted of two small wells, one within the space of the camp, the other some distance to the south-east of the walls.

The English went into the entrenchment on Saturday morning; by Sunday, midday, the iron circle was completely closed about them. Guns of much greater calibre than those possessed by the English had been carried from the arsenal by the sepoys and mounted at different points around the slight mud walls of the British, and the sepoys, sheltering in buildings situated from 300 to 800 yards distant, poured an unceasing stream of rifle fire into the devoted camp.

Now began an experience unexampled in all history. Hour after hour, under the fierce heat of the Indian sun, women and children panted and suffered within the flimsy walls of the hospital buildings. Hitherto they had never known the sun in his midday strength; dampened blinds, shaded rooms,

soft-footed servants and sweet water had day by day prevented them from feeling the full effects of his fierce rays. But here there was no tempering. The dust from the sun-baked plain rose up and swept into the crowd of huddled creatures, the pitiless heat burned through the roof and the thin walls, and nowhere could the tired eyes find darkness, nowhere could the soft limbs find ease from the gritty torture which clothed them as in a hair-shirt.

Nor was this all. From time to time through the blazing hours there came the whiz of a ball, and, with a crashing and rending, the projectile would hit the hospital wall, tearing its way through from side to side. Instantly arose shrieks and cries of terror from the little children and the more timid hearted of the women, and there would arise a low wailing and moaning of those whose fears of instant death found expression in tears. What thoughts of dread must have been in the minds of tender and loving mothers as they clutched their children to their breasts, what prayers upon their caked and parching lips in appeals to God that His strong arm should send them some relief!

Pitching low, some of the shots churned through the shrinking bodies, and to the terror caused by round shot or grape, and the rending of the frail shelter above the heads of the women, was added the deeper anguish caused by the sudden death or mutilation of some or other of their dearest and nearest. By the

third day the hospital was a tottering ruin of shattered walls and flapping screens, the splinters or falling bricks from which dealt death or wounds to the shuddering creatures who crouched upon the floor. Outside, toiling at the guns, or crouching at the low mud wall with rifle in hand, husband, son, father or sweetheart had the tense excitement of at least doing something against the howling hordes of fiends thirsting for their lives. The women had the harder part; to sit listening, or to note the shot crash among their sisters, and to try to comfort and to soothe where they knew that, this side of the grave, there was no comfort and no solace to be hoped for. Is it to be wondered at that some went mad, and that others, taking their children with them, rushed out into the open, to make themselves a mark for the swift death that they craved? Others, however, with quiet faces, smiles on their haggard lips, with gentle words and hands and eyes, went about helping, soothing, and comforting, showing an infinite tenderness and fortitude.

It was soon apparent, when it was now too late, that Sir Hugh Wheeler was not fit for the strenuous post of leader, and his place was filled by a Captain Moore, a tall Irishman, fair, blue eyed, with words of cheer always on his lips, as intrepid as a lion, yet with the caution, the coolness of a born leader. "Wheresoever there was most pressing risk, and wheresoever there was direst wretchedness, his pleasant presence was seldom long wanting. Under the rampart; at

the batteries; in some out-picket, where men were dropping like pheasants under a fearful cross-fire; in some corner of the hospital, to a brave heart more fearful still, where lay the mangled forms of those young and delicate beings whom war should always spare—ever and everywhere was heard his sprightly voice speaking words of encouragement, of exhortation, of sympathy, and even of courteous gallantry. Where-ever Moore had passed he left men something more courageous, and women something less unhappy."

The range of buildings previously mentioned as being unfinished barracks, which lay to the south-west of the entrenchment, was an object of constant battle between the Europeans and their besiegers. The white men only held the portion nearest their camp, and as this formed the key of their position, the little company holding it were told to surrender it only with their lives. It was a place which constantly suffered the assaults of the enemy, who swarmed like rats in the other portion of the buildings. So desperate was the fighting in this quarter that the little corps of sixteen men had a surgeon to themselves, who was constantly kept busy. Sometimes the garrison would invite others of the British to come and help them repel a more than usually fierce assault, and then, sallying forth, the combined force would go through the line of barracks, bayoneting all who stayed, shooting those perched up on the walls, and driving the rest across the plain, when the guns from

the camp would send them helter-skelter before a storm of grape and canister.

Some eight days after the beginning of the siege the sepoys made a general assault. First the cavalry, and then the infantry, backed by the hooligans of the bazaars, swarmed toward the earthworks. But the English sahibs, each with his rifle, or working at the guns with his squad, received them with so fierce a fire that, after a short but bitter engagement, what were left of the sepoys retired and resumed their tactics of battering down the group of stubborn hearts with heavy cannon trained upon them from every side. As long as was possible our men returned their fire from the ten pieces which were mounted at the low walls. Of these, eight were nine-pounder guns, and soon the supply of ammunition for these ran out, and they had to shoot with eight-pounder balls. The result was that shots could not be fired with accuracy.

Thus, day after day, the unequal contest went on. At night little rest was allowed to the harassed garrison, for round shot continually crashed overhead or shattered a portion of the frail hospital. Hour after hour the rebels poured an unceasing rain of shot, shell, and musket balls into the little plot of sandy soil between the mud walls. Some of the defenders sank down beside their guns or their muskets, and slept the sleep of utter exhaustion, deaf to the storm of projectiles that hummed or shrieked or pattered around them, and every hour saw some one slain, either of the

brave defenders or of the wretched women and children. One shell fell among a group of soldiers' wives and killed and wounded seven. A Mrs White, the wife of a private, was walking with her husband in a trench under cover of the wall, her twin children in her arms. A single bullet killed her husband, and passed through both the mother's arms. A native nurse, dandling a baby, had both legs shot off by a cannon ball, the child being uninjured. A son of Sir Hugh Wheeler was lying wounded on a sofa, his two sisters and his mother being about him, when a cannon shot burst through the room and left him headless. Mr Hillersdon was talking to his wife, the lady referred to in the letter from which extracts have already been given, and was cut in two by a round shot. Mercifully, a mass of falling bricks killed the young widow two days later.

So the terrible chronicle of deaths, wounds, and mutilations might be extended indefinitely. The sepoy marksmen spared nobody. The little children, who, getting used, as they did, to the roar and crash of guns, ventured to play in some apparently sheltered spot, were shot down as remorselessly as were their parents.

In the torrid heat of the day the craving for water was a torture that never ceased, and was added to the increasing pangs of hunger. To get water from the single well within the walls was a perilous act, for the sepoys had trained guns upon the spot, and the sight of one attempting to draw water was the signal for an

instant storm of shot and shell converging upon the well. Night brought no relief, for at the sound of the creaking tackle, whereby the water was raised, the fire of grape instantly belched forth. Nevertheless, men went to and fro, daring death for the sake of the women, the little ones, and the wounded. "My friend, John M. Killop, of the Civil Service," wrote Captain Mowbray Thomson, one of the four survivors from these terrible experiences, "greatly distinguished himself here; he became, self-constituted, Captain of the Well. He jocosely said that he was no fighting man, but would make himself useful where he could, and accordingly he took this post; drawing for the supply of the women and the children as often as he could. It was less than a week after he had undertaken this self-denying service when his numerous escapes were followed by a grapeshot wound in the groin, and speedy death. Disinterested even in death, his last words were an earnest entreaty that somebody would go and draw water for a lady to whom he had promised it." Many of those who thirsted suffered in silence, for they knew that every drop of water was purchased by blood, but the moaning of the little ones was too dreadful to hear, and brave men, to ease their sufferings, would dare death rather than that they should continue to be tortured. Some of the children were seen sucking pieces of old water-bags, or gnawing scraps of leather, in the vain attempt to moisten their parched throats and lips.

There was also a well which lay some 200 yards south of the camp, near the walls of the unfinished barracks. But no water was drawn from it, for it was the cemetery of the slowly thinning garrison. Every night, at an hour varying on each occasion so as to minimize the risk of drawing the enemy's fire, the bodies of those who had died during the day were borne in stealth and with scant attendance, and committed to the friendly earth. Very brief was the service held on the brink of the well under the flashing stars, with the roar of cannon occasionally punctuating the low solemn words uttered by the chaplain. Two hundred and fifty bodies were there buried in the space of three weeks. Those who thus died and found rest were to be envied; they had suffered greatly indeed, but the fear of pain and death was past now, and they had not to suffer the crowning horrors reserved for those who still survived.

Midway through this time of agony, namely, on the 13th of June, a great disaster befell the little garrison. A fragment of shell fell on the thatched roof of part of the hospital, and in a moment the tindery mass was in flames. It was dark at the time, and the light from the blazing building lit up the forms of women and children escaping from the fire, and of the men bearing the wounded into other shelter. Gleefully the sepoys poured shot and shell into the flying people, killing and wounding many. Elated with their success, the sepoys thought it was a favour-

able opportunity to dash upon the entrenchment. But they reckoned without the cool brains of 'the men behind the guns.' There was a good supply of loaded muskets ready to the hand of each marksman, and the latter, crouching behind the earthwork, or beside his gun, allowed the rebels to come close up before, suddenly, a hail of canister and musket balls burst forth, spreading death and terror among the ranks of the rebels. The musketry men, picking up their spare weapons quickly one after the other, poured volley after volley into the yelling wretches, breaking them up with great slaughter.

That night was a night of terror, in which the roar of the flames, the scream and crash of the great shot, the hum and patter of bullets, the shrieks of the wounded, threatened with death by fire, the cries and weeping of women and children crouching in the trenches beneath the earth walls, the shouts and howls of the clouds of advancing sepoys—all dominated by the fitful glare of the burning building, were elements of horror which combined to craze the weaker, already sapped by hunger, thirst, and daily dread, and to depress even the stoutest hearted.

Captain Moore and his brave comrades, however, were superior to all fear, and on the following night he suggested that they should give the enemy a proof of the fact that the calamity, severe as it was, had not succeeded in making them downhearted. At the dead of night, with fifty picked men behind him,

Moore stole out of the camp, and dashed into the lines of the enemy. Under cover of the darkness they spiked or rolled over guns, bayoneted or clubbed sleepers and other unwary rebels, blew up a piece which had been particularly offensive, and then ran back, carrying four of their number wounded, and leaving one whom they could not recover.

After the destruction of the hospital the sufferings of the wounded, the women, and the children had an added misery. All the medical stores had been destroyed in the flames ; there was no medicine, no relief could be given by opiates, nor were there surgical instruments to alleviate by swift operations. Now the only opiate was the stupor of exhaustion, and the only knife was the keen scythe of Death himself. On the women and children the sun now poured his fiercest rays, for with the loss of the hospital their only place of shelter was gone. They lay fainting in the meagre shadows of the low earth walls, and as the sun moved so they dragged their half-swooning and gaunt frames from one shady spot to another ; or pieces of cloth were pegged across angles of the walls, and under these the poor creatures panted and gasped the dreadful hours away. The most delicate, those who had hitherto been sheltered from every harshness and discomfort of existence, had now to lie on the hard, sun-baked earth, grimed with dirt, tortured by dust and flies, a prey to terrible thoughts of despair and to more terrible dreams, in which they

saw again the green fields and twilight woods of dear England.

Thus, with daily dwindling numbers, with lessening food and with failing ammunition and arms, the little garrison fought on and waited for the relief which they hoped might be on its way from Lucknow or from Allahabad. Things, indeed, were becoming desperate. One howitzer had been knocked useless; a cannon had had its muzzle destroyed, others had their sides beaten in; and so the tale of wrecked guns continued until only two were left. These were drawn back and loaded, and reserved for the purpose of repelling a determined assault. Even of these the bore had become so smooth that the charges could not be driven home properly, so that it was necessary to ask the poor ladies to give up their stockings wherein to wrap the round shot.

From the first days efforts had been made to get messengers out of the camp to steal through the sepoys' lines to take letters to Sir Henry Lawrence, telling him all that had happened and asking that relief should be sent them. Many of these messengers never got through, and were never heard of again; others came back after the whole tragic business was over and Cawnpore was in British hands again, and pointed to lopped ears or hands, split noses or other mutilations as proof of the treatment meted out to the spies of the *Feringees.*

Those who did succeed in reaching Lucknow had

had to hide their messages in most mysterious places about the body, and those replies which were smuggled through to the camp were borne by messengers who hid them in an equally mysterious manner. Sometimes the besieged would think they heard the sound of distant cannon and they would strain their ears, their faces meanwhile lighting up with hope. They knew that a column, 1000 strong, was making all the speed it could from Calcutta, but they guessed the difficulties it had to encounter, its battles with mutinous troops, its assaults on revolted stations. Still they hoped that in some way it would reach them before they were at their last handful of pease and flour, and before their last round of ammunition was fired.

Then, finally, a letter came, one which Sir Henry Lawrence had had to write with great agony of mind, in which he said that he was unable to spare a portion of the already weak force with which he had to defend the people under his own care. When the contents of the letter became known to the garrison, the women wept, but into the gaunt faces of the men came a grimmer look. A reply was sent back by Captain Moore in the name of Sir Hugh Wheeler and of his comrades, saying that since no help could relieve them, they were resolved to hold the foe at bay to the last man.

The 23rd of June dawned, the day on which Clive had fought the battle that had founded the

empire of the East India Company, which for a hundred years now had controlled the destinies of the greater part of Hindustan. The Nana, like the leaders at Delhi, was assured that this day would see the end of the British *raj* in India, and therefore he decided on a vehement attack upon the entrenchment, which should now be swept off the face of the earth. Throughout the previous night the defenders of the barracks, still headed by Captain Thomson, were assured, by the sounds issuing from the portions in possession of the sepoys, that something of special import was afoot. He feared an attack in the dark by overwhelming forces, and therefore sent to Captain Moore, asking if he could spare reinforcements.

Captain Moore replied that the only men he could spare were himself and Lieutenant Delafosse, and both these men quickly came. Moore listened to the racket made by the sepoys and then, seized with a brilliant idea, he drew his sword, and telling Delafosse to follow them, they rushed toward the sepoy-haunted barracks. Moore's voice rang out in the curt command, "Number One to the front!" and the sepoys, thinking that the well-known words would bring the usual detachment of sahibs with fixed bayonets, rushed out of the barracks and ran like hares back to their lines.

At dawn, however, the sepoys came back in almost overwhelming numbers and fought with ferocity and pluck. Nevertheless it was in vain that they hurled themselves against the little band of Europeans in

the ruined barracks. Try as they might they were ever beaten back, until their slain lay in heaps upon the ground, cumbering the movements of the living.

At the same time a determined attack was made upon the entrenchment by the whole rebel force. Pulled by bullocks and horses, guns were brought up, but before they could be fired the deadly hail of bullets shot down the animals and caused havoc among the gunners. Other sepoys, advancing in solid masses, were preceded by skirmishers who pushed great bales of cotton before them as shields. But the British fired the bales, and so steady and incessant was their shooting that the lines of rebel infantry wilted away, and the rest, losing heart, retired.

A little while afterward the haggard Englishmen, dazed by hunger, thirst, and heat, shaken by the excitement of the repulse, but still clutching their muskets, saw a troop of unarmed sepoys come forward. These, advancing, salaamed to the sahibs and begged permission to bury their dead. This was accorded to them, and while the sepoys performed the last duty to their slain, the gaunt, shadowy-eyed British watched them grimly from the walls.

CHAPTER XVII

THE GREAT INFAMY

IN a room of a house in Delhi were certain prisoners of the Nana, consisting of a well-to-do merchant, Mr Greenway, and his family, and a Eurasian woman, named Jacobi. The Nana was pretending to accept a ransom for the Greenway family, but his design was to possess himself of the forty thousand pounds of ransom and then to murder the prisoners. On the evening of the day on which the sepoys' last attack upon the camp had ended so dismally, Mrs Jacobi was informed that she was to go to Sir Hugh Wheeler next day with a message from the Nana.

At nine o'clock in the morning the English saw a palanquin being borne across the battle space toward them. It contained Mrs Jacobi, and as soon as she had convinced the guard that she was no spy she was admitted. She delivered a written message, addressed "To the subjects of Her Most Gracious Majesty, Queen Victoria." It was laconic. "All those who are in no way connected with the acts of Lord Dalhousie, and are willing to lay down their arms, shall receive a safe passage to Allahabad."

A council of war, consisting of General Wheeler, and Captains Moore and Whiting, met to consider

this curious offer. Some debate took place. General Wheeler did not like the thought of yielding to his own rebellious sepoys, but both Moore and Whiting pointed out that if all the garrison had consisted of fighting men they would fight to the last man rather than yield, but that, for the sake of the women and children still remaining, and of the wounded, this offer should be accepted. Moreover, they urged, the rainy season would soon be upon them, and with the first tropical downpour their weak mud walls would be levelled to the ground, and in other respects they would be unable to hold the place. Provisions, too, were dwindling to vanishing point. On full consideration, therefore, it was decided to accept the offer.

Next day the terms of capitulation were arranged between Moore and Whiting and Azimoolah and a hanger-on of the Nana's named Jwala Pershad. The conditions were that the fortification, treasure, and artillery should be delivered up, and that the British should be allowed to march out under arms, with sixty rounds of ammunition to each man; that carriages should be provided for the conveyance of the women and children and the wounded; and that boats should be made ready and provisioned at the nearest landing-place on the Ganges.

The Nana sent back word that he agreed to these conditions, but that the British must evacuate their camp that night, otherwise he would train all his

batteries upon the sahibs. To this impudent demand Captain Whiting made this characteristically British reply:

"Tell the Nana," he said, "that if he wants the entrenchment so badly he has only to come and take it. His soldiers know the way to it, as well as they know the way back. If the worst comes to the worst, too, tell him that we have still enough powder left in our magazine to blow both him and his army and ourselves into kingdom come!"

No more was heard as to the instant evacuation of the camp, and it was settled that next morning all things should be ready for the departure of the sahibs and their women folk.

Jwala Pershad, with two companions, came over in the evening, and stated that they were sent by the Nana as an earnest of his good faith. Jwala commiserated Sir Hugh Wheeler on the privations he had had to endure at his advanced age, and expressed great indignation at the mutinous conduct of the sepoys.

During these last hours in the entrenchment the British prepared food and tried to rejoice that at last they were leaving the place which had seen so much misery, so much death and despair. They cooked for themselves an extra quantum of boiled lentils and meal cake, and washed it down with "copious draughts of water clouded with brickdust and powdered cement." Then there were some hours of fitful slumber, some

dreams of the home that now was surely not far beyond their reach.

At the last moment some felt a sadness at leaving the sun-baked space, with its litter of odds and ends of dresses, papers, books, empty tins, and its shattered hospital walls. These men and women moved about from spot to spot, half ashamed of the emotions they felt. Here, in a corner of the hospital, was where this or that dear one, maimed by a round shot, breathed her last; and there was where the young soldier had crouched, rifle in hand, in the burning hours of the day, for twenty-one days. Here, too, was where his poor chum, Dick or Harry, had fallen a few days after the siege began, who gasped a few words of farewell in the arms of his friend. Many were the prayers, too, uttered over the well of the dead beyond the sandy walls.

At length all was ready. The carriages and palanquins had come and were waiting to bear the women and children and the wounded down to the boats at the Ghaut, not more than a mile away. Slowly, with many painful jolts and jerks to poor wounded bodies, the sick were laid in palanquins, and the women and children mounted with gladness into the bullock carts. Crowds of sepoys, natives, and *budmashes* stood about them, some with commiseration on their faces, as they looked at the rags, the grime of those that had once been so clean in their persons and dress, and so proud in their bearing, now with faces blistered

and scorched and reddened by the sun, their dresses torn and discoloured.

When the long procession got upon its way, and Major Vibart, the last man, had left the walls of the camp, a mob of natives instantly dashed into the enclosure on the search for loot. One among them has told what he saw there: "Three useless brass guns that had been split, two leathern bottles of liquid butter, a sack of fine flour, and the bodies of eleven Europeans. They were on quilts on the floor, some of them still breathing, though dying from severe gunshot wounds." These, together with a litter of torn garments, broken toys, torn pictures, books, and pieces of music, were all the loot to be found.

At the head of the procession marched those that were left of the 32nd Regiment, with their brave leader, Captain Moore, at their head. Then came the native bearers of the palanquins, bearing their weight of groaning wounded; after these the bullock carts, crowded with women and children. A few elephants here and there—elephants who, as has been suggested, may have been tugging guns a century before on the fateful field of Plassey—plodded along with women and children clutching nervously at the ropes upon their backs. Last came another troop of such men as could still walk and would, if need be, still fight, haggard and gaunt as they might look, faint and dizzy as they might feel.

Slowly the painful cavalcade took its way across

the sun-baked plain toward the road leading to the river. But what is this that straggles a little way behind the main body? It is Colonel Ewart of the 34th. He is wounded and is borne upon a bed on the backs of four native porters. Beside him walks his wife, one who has been the sweetest and bravest of the sweet brave women in these last terrible three weeks. Somehow the porters are lazy, the mem-sahib's voice is too gentle in its urging, and the sahib is too sick to quicken their pace with his cane. The last of the main body of their friends disappear round a corner of the road. Then seven or eight sepoys belonging to the Colonel's own regiment walk toward them. "Put down the bed!" they command the porters. Colonel Ewart looks up and addresses them. They mock him, and say, "Isn't this a fine parade?" and shout with laughter. Then murder looks from their eyes, and raising their *tulwars* they hew the sick man down, before the dreadful eyes of his wife. Then they turn to her: "Throw down what you have hidden and go; you are a woman!" She takes out of her dress a piece of stuff with something wrapped in it, and gives it to one of the murderers. He steps back, lifts his sword, and slays her with one blow.

The road to the river ran down a ravine, at the head of which was a bridge. On this and on the banks stood a "vast multitude, speechless and motionless as spectres," watching the slow procession of

haggard and weary English folk winding down into that hollow road. When the last of the white men had passed down, the sepoys drew a double line of guards across the road, telling the people to keep back.

The head of the company, reaching the river-side, found a fleet of native barges, with thatched covers, waiting for them. There was no landing stage, so that the officers, standing knee-deep in the water, began to hand the wounded and the women and children into the boats. Neither boatmen nor bearers offered to aid them. The women and the little ones began gladly to find places on the rough seats, and to congratulate themselves on the near prospect of the voyage to home and safety.

Suddenly the shrill blast of a bugle rang out from somewhere across the valley. Instantly the boatmen leaped from their places into the water and made toward the bank. At the same time, from behind bushes and houses on either bank, rose lines of sepoys who, raising their muskets to their shoulders, fired a rain of bullets into the wretched crowd in and about the boats. Cannon roared, and grapeshot swept the frail boats from stern to prow, killing and wounding. Then the thatched roofs of the boats burst into flame, and under the hot sun the whole fleet was quickly wrapped in fire.

Fire fell upon the wounded and the others huddled in the boats, some leaped into the water, hiding under

the sides of the boats from the hail of bullets that spattered on the water, hit the wood beside them or found its living mark at last. Shrieks and groans, prayers and appeals arose to the dazzling skies, shining like brass above them. But still the pitiless rain of death fell on these brave men and innocent creatures whom their destroyers had now got at their mercy, away from the frail but inexpugnable mud walls.

Meanwhile, as the last of the long procession came out upon the bank, the same murderous fury was unloosed. A half-caste Christian woman who survived tells of what she saw. She was Mrs Bradshaw, wife of one of the bandsmen of the 56th Regiment:

"In the boat where I was to have gone," she related, "was the school-mistress and twenty-two missies. General Wheeler came last in a *palkee*. As he got out of the *palkee*, head foremost, a trooper gave him a cut with his sword into the neck, and he fell into the water. My son was killed near him. I saw it, alas! alas! Some were stabbed with bayonets, others cut down. . . . The schoolgirls were burnt to death. I saw their hair and clothes catch fire. In the water, a few paces off, by the next boat, we saw the youngest daughter of Colonel Williams. A sepoy was going to kill her with his bayonet. She said, 'My father was always kind to sepoys!' He turned away, and just then a villager struck her on the head with his club, and she fell into the water."

The men set their shoulders to the boats and tried to push them into the stream. But the Nana had seen to it that they should not escape thus. Most of the barges lay too firmly aground. Only three were pushed loose, of which two drifted across to the other side of the river, where the sepoys waiting there captured their defenceless passengers. The third alone floated into the fairway of the stream.

Other Englishmen, seeing it was in vain to save the lives of others exposed to the fury of the murderers on both sides of the river, stripped and plunged into the river and began to swim to the boat that had got off. Many were shot and, throwing up their hands, disappeared. Captain Mowbray Thomson and Private Murphy succeeded in getting away, and Lieutenant Harrison, chased by three troopers, swam to a small island. Two of the sepoys he slew, the other declined to risk his life against the white man, and went back. Thomson, Murphy, Harrison, and one or two others reached the boat, which went on its journey amid a hail of rattling bullets.

Those that were now left alive in the hands of the mutineers were women and children, 125 in all, and these, a wretched and distressful company, were dragged out of the stream where they crouched and were rounded up on the shore. Their pitiful state was such that poor water-carriers, people of the lowest caste, gave them water from the skins they carried. The sepoys tore from soft hands the

rings they bore, and pulled from tender necks the chains and jewels which excited their cupidity. They sat there in the burning sun all the morning; then they were driven forth, along the road by which they had come, plodding wearily under a sun as pitiless as the murderers, some sobbing, others dry-eyed and dazed, still others with the calm face of pride; little children at the hands of some—with what thoughts of terror and with what prayers filling their minds who shall say. Many were wounded, two were badly hurt, and had their heads bound up with handkerchiefs. Some were wet, with their torn clothes covered with blood and the slime of the river, their feet bare—all the charm of dainty dress and refined looks and manners which were theirs a few weeks ago lost in this their last desperate condition.

The sad company were taken before the pavilion of the Nana, who, after looking along their ranks with a baleful eye, ordered them to be confined in a certain house near by, where they were guarded by sepoys who had just come in from Allahabad.

It was the will of the ruffian of Bithoor that all the white people should be accounted for, and pursuit of the third boat was energetically continued. The load of misery in this boat was almost too great for the vessel's stability; more than ninety poor souls were crammed into a space that could barely hold fifty. There was no food or water in the boat, neither oars nor poles. It drifted as the current drove it in spite

of vain efforts to steer with a stretcher, and to propel the craft with boards torn from the bulwarks. Thus the boat zigzagged upon its way at the rate of half a mile an hour. When it grounded upon a sandbank, some of the men jumped into the water and pushed it off. It was the continual mark of cannon from either shore, one shot from which had smashed the rudder early in the day. Grape and canister poured among the huddled mass of humanity, and nothing was heard but groans, shrieks, and prayers. These, and water dipped by the hand from the river in which they floated so miserably, were all that passed their lips that day.

Many were the brave men who, having fought incessantly behind the mud walls of the entrenchment, and escaped from that with their lives, now suffered death in this short and miserable flight. Two young officers, Ashe and Bolton, leaped out to push the boat from a sandbank and sank down riddled with bullets; the heroic Moore, working with a will and cheerful yet, in spite of a broken collar-bone, fell, his brave heart stilled by a musket ball. The same round shot killed two men and maimed a third. For a time the slain, the wounded, and the living were mingled in one dreadful confusion in the bottom of the boat. But the need of lightening the craft as much as possible forced the survivors to consign the dead bodies of their dear comrades to the waters of the river.

At dusk the boat stranded fast, but under cover

of the night the women were landed and the boat released, the sepoys still harassing them. The latter shot arrows tipped with lighted charcoal, which set the thatched roof of the boat alight. This, however, the English cut away and threw into the stream.

Next day, at two in the afternoon, the boat stuck again, and crowds of sepoys came toward them, and in a pitiless rainstorm the natives subjected the English to a keen musket fire. After five hours of this experience, a boat approached them manned with mutineers sent by the Nana. This ran upon a sandbank, and a score of Englishmen dashed across the shallows and slaughtered most of its crew, the best swimmers only surviving to report that these sahibs were most dangerous when their position was most desperate.

The boat swung free during the night, and some hoped that now, with the river rising, they might outdistance the sepoys. But daylight found them in a creek; their vessel had grounded again, and the musket shots of the rebels came pattering among them. Major Vibart, who was dying, ordered Mowbray Thomson and Delafosse to clear away the crowd of sepoys and villagers threatening them near by. There were still eleven soldiers and a sergeant in the boat, and these, for all that they were half-starved and utterly fagged, eagerly stepped forth with the two officers. With the utmost abandon they charged the multitude

of natives, and then, turning, they cut their way through again, and bleeding, but their number not diminished, they reached the shore where they had left the boat. It was gone, with its sad freight of ninety women, children, and wounded men. While they had been fighting on land the boat had jerked loose, a crowd of sepoys had waded out to it, and after a sanguinary struggle, in which wounded men had fought to save their women and children from these murderers, the British had been overpowered. While Thomson and Delafosse and their men gazed blankly at the place where they had left the vessel, it was being escorted back to Cawnpore under a strong guard.

Thomson and Delafosse turned and led their men along the river bank, with an interval of twenty paces between each man to lessen the risk of being shot by the rebels, who still doggedly tracked them. For three miles the Englishmen kept up a running fight against their foes, who constantly increased in numbers. At length, the fire of the sepoys becoming very warm, all but one dashed into a little temple, or 'sammy house,' a hundred yards from the river. Here they kept the sepoys at bay for some time, until the latter prepared to blow up the temple. Then the thirteen survivors leapt forth, and firing one more volley, rushed upon their enemies.

Six fell mortally wounded; the remainder, running to the river, threw in their rifles and then dived into

the water, and swam away. Volley after volley from the yelling sepoys dashed about the seven bobbing heads. Two of the British were killed, a third, exhausted, swam to the shore, where he was instantly slain. The other four, comprising Mowbray Thomson, Delafosse, and the privates, Murphy and Sullivan, after swimming six miles, were helped ashore by friendly natives, the vassals of Dirigbijah Singh, a loyal gentleman of Oudh. Naked and exhausted, with prices upon their heads, they were yet kindly treated and protected by this little chieftain. For three weeks they slept and ate, talked and dozed, laughed or chatted with their native friends, visited daily by the venerable Dirigbijah Singh, who brought constant inquiries after their welfare from his lady, who had heard of their marvellous sufferings and admired their indomitable bravery.

Then the Nana got upon their track and they had to begin their wanderings again ; but at length they walked into the British camp of the column advancing to the relief of Lucknow. After the first words of explanation and greeting, Thomson and Delafosse went to the commanding officer, and, as if the terrible experiences they had suffered were things to be looked for in an ordinary day's work, they reported themselves as present and ready for duty. Both these officers lived to do their part in the stamping out of the mutiny and to reach higher rank in their profession ; Sullivan died of cholera a fortnight after reaching kindly British

hands; Murphy, a few years later, was appointed guardian of the Memorial Gardens at Cawnpore, the peaceful spot which now commemorates the sufferings of the women and children who found death at that place.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE VENGEANCE OF NEILL

THE boatload of English who had been captured by their pursuers when Thomson and Delafosse had leaped ashore was towed back to Cawnpore, and at dawn on the 30th June again found themselves in the surroundings of the terrible experiences of three days before. What happened then may well be related in the words of a native spy whose evidence was taken a short time afterward:

"There were brought back," says this witness, "sixty sahibs, twenty-five mem-sahibs, and four children. The Nana ordered the sahibs to be separated from the mem-sahibs and shot by the 1st Bengal Native Infantry. But they said: 'We will not kill the sahib people. Put them in prison.' Then said the Nadiree regiment: 'What word is this? Put them in prison? *We* will kill the males.' So the sahibs were seated on the ground, and two companies of the Nadiree regiment stood with their muskets ready to fire. Then said one of the mem-sahibs, the doctor's wife [known to have been Mrs Boyes], 'I will not leave my husband. If he must die, I will die with him.' So she ran and sat down behind her husband,

clasping him round the waist. Directly she said this, the other mem-sahibs said: 'We will also die with our husbands.' And they all sat down, each by her husband. Then their husbands said, 'Go back'; but they would not. Whereupon the Nana ordered his soldiers, and they pulled them away forcibly. But they could not pull away the doctor's wife, who there remained. Then the Padre [this was Captain Seppings, who had a broken arm] called out to the Nana, and requested leave to read prayers before they died. The Nana granted it, and the Padre's hands were loosened so far as to enable him to take a small book from his pocket, with which he read. After the Padre had read a few prayers, he shut the book, and the sahibs shook hands all round. Then the sepoys fired. One sahib rolled one way, one another, as they sat. But they were not dead, only wounded. So they went in, and finished them off with swords."

The ladies and children were sent to add to the wretched crowd of captives which the Nana had already under guard. The conqueror, satisfied with his defeat of the British, now got himself proclaimed Neishwa, or king. The report of the guns with which this great fact was announced to the world echoed in the ears of the imprisoned women, many of whom were already ill with wounds, the heat, or anxiety of mind, and made them wonder, perhaps, whether they were the sounds of the guns of their kinsmen fighting their way to their release.

While these events had been taking place, Neill had been refitting and resting his men at Allahabad, 120 miles away. Here he had been superseded in the command of the relieving forces by General Henry Havelock, who arrived in camp on the 30th June with the first companies of the little force with which he was expected to take Cawnpore and relieve Lucknow, which in its turn was now besieged by multitudes of mutinous sepoys.

Havelock set out on the 7th July in a terrific rainstorm. His force, when complete, never exceeded 1500 in number, but they were all men of tried fortitude. "Better soldiers," said Archibald Forbes, "have never trod this earth." His six guns were commanded by Captain Maude, whose dash and valour were to add the value of three batteries to the force under his leadership. The force comprised 76 men of the Royal Artillery, 400 of the Madras Fusiliers, about 300 of the 78th Highlanders, 620 men of the 64th and 84th, and some Sikhs and native irregular horse.

Full of forebodings, the English soldiers splashed eagerly through the mud and slush of the road. They had heard that General Wheeler had had to capitulate, and rumours that his gallant band had been massacred were persistent, but, as yet, only half believed. For the first three days, Captain Maude relates, they waded in a sea of slush, knee deep now, and now breast high, while the flood of tropical rain beat down from

overhead. As far to left and right as eye could pierce extended one vast morass. But for the rest of the eight days, during which the soldiers marched and fought with a stubborn fury and white-hot persistence which admitted of no repulse, the sun beat down pitilessly, slaying almost as many as did the bullets of the enemy.

Havelock had sent on a column of 800 men with two guns under the command of Major Renaud, to get into touch with the forces being sent down by the Nana, to hang all insurgents, and to learn whatever possible of the movements of the enemy.

Meanwhile the Nana had collected his army and sent it out under the command of his hanger-on, Jwala Pershad, expecting to have an easy victory over the few men, half of them native soldiers, under Renaud. But by forced marches Havelock had caught up with his vanguard, and on Sunday morning, the 12th July, his soldiers, having out-marched their baggage, were resting under the trees, some rubbing melted fat on their blistered feet, others cooling their chafes in the pools, many more too dead-beat to do anything but lie down.

Suddenly came the thud of horses' hoofs, and some cavalry which had been sent forward to reconnoitre came thundering back, followed by the white-clad troopers of the Nana. The enemy believed they had but a small force to deal with, and their cavalry came

galloping over the swampy ground anticipating an easy victory. Seeing the massed lines of infantry quickly forming they instantly reined up, almost paralysed with fear. Without delay Havelock launched his infantry at them, swept his Highlanders forward on the right, and the 84th and some Punjabis on the left.

The infantry, armed with the new Enfield rifles, poured an incessant fire into the massed hordes of sepoys, and Captain Maude, dashing up with his guns, dealt death and wounds far and wide among their ranks. The sepoys could not stand it. In a moment three guns were abandoned, position after position was lost in face of the fierce attack of the British, savagely rejoicing as they were at getting to grips, at long last, with these murderers of women and children and wounded men. The retreat became a rout, muskets and accoutrements were thrown aside, all guns were forsaken, and far and wide the helter-skelter continued, while the fugitives spread the rumour that the sahibs had come back in numbers like the sands of the sea, some [the Highlanders] dressed with skirts, like women, to remind themselves of the revenge they had sworn to have for the murder of mem-sahibs, and some in tall blue caps, who hit their mark with rifles that did not fire. The enemy did not kill one of our men, but the sun slew a dozen.

On the 15th the sepoys dared another contest at

a village twenty-two miles south of Cawnpore, and again they had to flee before the fierce faces of the sahibs, whose flashing eyes were as grim as the gleam from their shining bayonets. The sepoy leader on that occasion was Bala Rao, the brother of the Nana, who carried back, together with a wound in his shoulder, the news of the second defeat. Bitter was the counsel given at the meeting then held by the defeated leaders, and too receptive was the cruel mind of the Nana to all the evil promptings of these murderous ruffians.

It is useless to describe in all its sickening details the culminating act of butchery which was committed on that evening in July by order of the Nana. It was thought by the murderers that if the Europeans heard that all the women and children had been killed, they would not risk another battle merely for the sake of burying the corpses.

There were five men imprisoned with the women. These were first brought out, and as they walked toward where the Nana sat under a tree they were shot. Then the sepoy guards of the other prisoners were told to shoot the women and children through the window. Some refused; six advanced sullenly and fired at the ceiling of the room. Thereupon five wretches entered with swords, and in the twilight of the summer evening perpetrated that act of wholesale murder, the horror of which will surely never cease to pierce the minds of British men and women.

The dead, the dying, the wounded, and the few still living were left in the room all night, and in the morning the bodies were dragged out, those that still lived were slain, and all, with one or two children who yet survived, were thrown down a well near by, the dreadful act being watched by a great crowd of townspeople, villagers, and sepoys.

Then the Nana himself, having put an end to the last of the sad multitude of Europeans who had fallen into the net spread by his treachery, went out to do final battle with the avenging host of Henry Havelock.

At three o'clock that same morning, when his little army had rested for a few hours after their last battle, Havelock formed up his men and said to them, "Lads, you have done well, but I have still something for you to do. I hear that there are still two hundred women and children in the hands of the Nana. We must save them. Think, lads, of our women and little ones in the power of those devils incarnate."

The men wanted no more encouragement, battle-weary though they were and yearning for sleep. They did not wait for the word of command; with a grim, fierce shout they turned their faces to the road, knowing naught of the poor dead in the dark room at Cawnpore who had now found release from the horror and anguish of the last of their ordeals. Twenty miles separated the British from Cawnpore, and the wearied

men, toiling in their heavy garments under the savage rays of the sun, pressed on determinedly, while here and there a man fell as if shot, beaten down by the heat.

In the outskirts of Cawnpore they came upon the army of the Nana, drawn up in a very strong position. Havelock resolved to turn the flank of the 5000 men in front of him, knowing that as they expected a frontal attack they would lose their heads if they were attacked in any other way. He kept the attention of the sepoys directed upon the fire of a company of Fusiliers, while he sent his Highlanders round on the enemy's left.

When at length the sepoys became aware of the main attack, they turned their heavy guns upon the British, and poured a cruel fire into their ranks. But the Highlanders never flinched, and at last, wheeling into line, Havelock launched his men at the guns. With bayonets flashing and kilts flying the men of the 78th were soon among the guns, stabbing the gunners with grim delight and showing no mercy.

The sepoy infantry lost heart, wavered, and then turned and fled, pursued for some distance by the Scotsmen. Our men believed the battle was won. They began to light their pipes and the officers to chat, when suddenly a twenty-four pounder shot came hurtling in among the ranks. At the same time masses of sepoy cavalry came over the plain, rallying

the flying footmen. From the decorations and trappings of a certain portion of the cavalry it seemed that the Nana himself had come forward to retrieve the day. The enemy's grape and canister were playing havoc among the British ranks, for our guns, owing to the exhaustion of the cattle drawing them, could not be brought up against them.

Then Havelock sent word that the 64th, who were lying down resting, should rise and charge. This they did, for they were tired of inaction, and shoulder to shoulder, with fierce bronzed faces they marched toward the enemy, holding their fire. The enemy's shot raced through their ranks, knocking over men here and there, but still the others held grimly on, until the relentless pertinacity of their looks and their steps began to instil uneasiness in the minds of the sepoy ranks before them. Suddenly, fixing their bayonets, the lines of bearded soldiers began to run toward their dark-faced enemy, but now the sepoys had quite lost heart. They broke and fled, and Captain Maude, having by now brought up some of his guns, poured grapeshot thick and fast among heir flying and disordered ranks. There was now no thought of rallying in the minds of the rebels, each tore off his pack, threw away his arms and his uniform, and strove to flee from the avenging bayonets that flashed so cruelly near behind him.

That night the Nana, one amid the rout of his army, was borne by his exhausted horse to his palace

at Bithoor. Next morning, with such of his people as had not fled, he disappeared into the jungles of Oudh. For a time he formed the centre to which the defeated troopers of the 2nd Cavalry and other mutineers gravitated, and with his women, his officers, and his servants he kept up some semblance of princely grandeur. He joined with Tantia Topee in his attack upon Cawnpore in the following November, and after the overwhelming defeat of the rebels by Sir Colin Campbell, the Nana again fled north into the jungles at the foot of the Himalayas. But little rest was allowed to him. Spies were all about him, the power of the British was reaching forward even into the depth of the jungle, desirous of wreaking vengeance upon this bloodthirsty slayer of women and children, and in a few weeks Dhoondoo Punth, stripped of most of his marks of wealth and rank, was a fugitive amid the pestilential wildernesses of Nepaul, half-starved and ill, full of anxiety, suffering heat and privations, and suspicious of every one near him. Thus for two years he passed a miserable existence, and then died and was burnt in the jungle. His people became scattered; some crept away to their villages, but many were caught later and hung, among these being Jwala Pershad.

The British camped on the battlefield that night, and next morning on entering Cawnpore they were informed that the women and children whom they had come to save had been mercilessly massacred.

Many went forthwith to the house, the Beebeegurh, which had been the scene of the wholesale murders. "They wandered sobbing through the rooms, saw what it were well could the outraged earth have straightway hidden. The inner apartment was ankle-deep in blood. The plaster was scored with sword-cuts: not high up, as where men have fought, but low down and about the corners, as if shrinking creatures had crouched there to avoid blows. Strips of dresses, vainly tied round the handles of the doors, signified the contrivances to which feminine despair had resorted as a means of keeping out the murderers." The floor was littered with trampled and torn dresses, shoes, slippers, and long locks of hair which had been shorn from living heads by sword-cuts. The number of poor creatures who met their death under such circumstances was 118 women and 92 children.

Can it be wondered at that after seeing such a sight the ferocity which had wrought this horrible deed excited equal ferocity in the hearts of those white men who had come too late to save the murdered ones? On the 20th Neill arrived with a small force, and the control of the city having been given into his charge by Havelock, he set about a systematic course of hangings. A gallows with three or four ropes was set up halfway between the slaughter-house and the well into which most of the dead had been thrown, and on this all were hung whom informers or spies or private

enemies alleged had taken any part in the massacres which had taken place since Wheeler evacuated the entrenchment on the 27th June.

In particular, Neill has been condemned for his order with regard to the punishment of the chief rebels or ringleaders of the mutiny at Cawnpore. Let his own words explain and, if necessary, justify his action. "Whenever a rebel is caught he is immediately tried, and unless he can prove a defence he is sentenced to be hanged at once: but the chief rebels or ringleaders I make first to clean up a certain portion of the blood, still two inches deep, in the shed where the fearful murder and mutilation of the women and children took place. To touch blood is most abhorrent to the high-caste natives. They think, by doing so, they doom their souls to perdition. Let them think so. My object is to inflict a fearful punishment for a revolting, cowardly, barbarous deed, and to strike terror into these rebels. The first I caught was a *subadar*, or native officer, a high-caste Brahmin, who tried to resist my order to clean up the very blood he had helped to shed; but I made the provost-marshal do his duty, and a few lashes soon made the miscreant accomplish his task. When done, he was taken out and immediately hanged and, after death, buried in a ditch at the roadside. No one who has witnessed the scenes of murder, mutilation, and massacre can ever listen to the word 'mercy' as applicable to these fiends."

This order of General Neill's remained in force until the arrival of Sir Colin Campbell on the 3rd of November 1857, when he immediately put a stop to it, saying that it was unworthy of the English name and of a Christian Government.

CHAPTER XIX

THE OUTBREAK AT LUCKNOW

IN the dining-room of the big mess-house in the cantonments at Lucknow the officers were having their evening meal. It was the night of May 30th, nearly three weeks after the mutineers at Meerut let loose the storm of revolution and murder which was at this time rising more and more violently throughout Bengal and the North-West.

The lamps above the table shone with a mellow light, the officers, having dined, were lounging at table, smoking cheroots and cigars, chatting and laughing. The native servants, silent and watchful, stood near, ready at a gesture or a word to pour wine or spirits into the glasses of the sahibs. In this one spot in India, at all events, things seemed peaceful, and the careless looks on many faces appeared to show that these officers at any rate felt quite secure in the loyalty of their own troops, who at this hour ought to be sleeping in their lines not a mile away.

At the head of the table sat Sir Henry Lawrence, the Governor of Oudh, of which Lucknow was the capital. A man of a tall figure, he looked much older than his years, which were only fifty. The thoughtful, dark eyes, the gentle and subdued manner, gave no

one who looked at him cursorily the impression of a man who had set his mark deep and abiding upon India and its government. He was a man who stood apart from most of the men with whom he had had to work, in the fact that he lived the spiritual life, not the life that had none but the interests of the outer world. He was intensely religious, though he never paraded the fact as other officials and officers frequently did, and every action of his was accompanied by the doubt as to whether it was the best he could do. Every thought and deed of his life was thought and done with prayer.

As he sat now at the head of the table there were many strong and striking faces beside him, but none quite so striking as his. His dark eyes, filled with melancholy, gleamed with humour now and then, and, looking out as they did from beneath beetling brows, gave him an air of strangeness; his thin cheeks looked as if they were wasted, and were scored with deep lines; and his long ragged beard added a further touch of weirdness to his appearance.

Everybody loved him, except men who shirked their duties, or those who tried to tyrannize over the natives or to oppress the weak. And none so easily gained the sympathy and confidence of the suspicious natives as he. Many a disloyal *jemadar*, or local Indian aristocrat, who hated the British *raj* for despoiling him of lands and revenue, yet respected Henry Lawrence, and knew that if he had been the sole

authority above them they would not have had to resent the high-handedness and injustice which was now making them rebels. They knew that this man, who had come to them too late to save them from all the ill effects of the acts of his predecessors, was compounded of naught but sympathy and sincerity in all his dealings.

In spite of the appearance of peace and contentment which pervaded the dining-room just then, all men's minds were on the *qui vive* for what might happen at any moment. It was nearly three weeks since the outbreak at Meerut, and to guard against any sudden uprising at Lucknow, Lawrence had already provisioned the Residency there, and had fortified an old but strong fort, the Muchee Bhowan, which stood about a mile to the north. The sepoys, restless and agitated, still performed their duties, but how long it would be before they showed the workings of rebellion was uncertain, and a week previously the white women and children had been warned to take refuge within the walls of the Residency.

Though the outlook was gloomy in the extreme, Lawrence would permit no one to show that all their minds were full of apprehension. Even now, as they sat at table, he was the centre of gay laughter and cheerful conversation. Yet none knew better than those of his immediate staff, who sat near him, how greatly he was harassed by the responsibilities of his position, and how deeply he was wrapped in melan-

choly reflections on the tragic possibilities that existed, having regard to the 600 women and children committed to his care.

That evening, as he sat chatting, his mind was oppressed more than usual, though his outward calm spoke nothing of the fears which possessed him. Captain Wilson, one of his personal staff, who sat near him, had come to him a few hours earlier and had said that he had heard from a spy on whom he had great reliance that mutiny was to break out that night at the firing of the nine o'clock gun.

Involuntarily through the evening the eyes of Lawrence and Wilson, and of others who had been told the news, had strayed to the clock on the wall at frequent intervals, and now that the big hand was almost upon the hour their attention often wandered from the careless talk which their own lips formed, and their laughter sounded hollow even to themselves. At length the clock struck the hour, and then was heard the great bellow of the gun on the parade ground not far distant. A few quiet moments passed while all were silent at the table, and then with an air of gaiety that still was strained, Lawrence turned smilingly to Wilson and said:

"Your friends are not punctual, Wilson."

Even as the words left his lips there resounded the crackle of musketry from the direction of the parade ground. Lawrence laughed; then there came the sound of racing feet and the roar of a distant crowd.

"Order the horses to be brought round, please," came the quiet tones of the Governor, who rose from his seat, his guests following his example. With a laughing word or joke, or in serious silence as each man's temperament constrained him, the officers walked to the door and waited with Lawrence on the steps of the Residency.

The darkness of the night was splashed here and there by the red gleams of fire, where already the mutineers had set houses on fire, shots and shouts resounded in the distance, and suddenly, as they stood looking about them, an English bungalow not two hundred yards distant burst into flame with a crackle and a roar.

Suddenly into the open space before the mess-house came the native guard, formed up into line facing the group of officers on the steps, their uniforms glittering in the light thrown by the burning bungalow.

The *subadar*, or native captain, came forward with a salute to Captain Wilson and said that, hearing the tumult, he had instantly turned out the mess-house guard. Should he order them to load?

Wilson turned to his chief and repeated the question.

"Oh, yes," replied Lawrence, "let them load."

Many in that group wondered if this was a wise order. They were in the hands of these sepoys, all of whom, they felt sure, were yearning to join in the orgy of incendiarism, looting, and murder with their compatriots a few hundred yards away. But no one

spoke, as they heard the sepoys ram their charges into the muskets with a clang. Then, raising their guns until the muzzles pointed at the breasts of the group upon the steps, the men adjusted as was usual the caps on the nipples.

At that moment the lives of Lawrence and his officers were not worth a moment's purchase if the least sign of fear or weakness had been shown. How easy it would be to shoot these sahibs down. Lucknow and the whole province of Oudh would then easily become the prey of the sepoys. But no word was uttered; to see the sahibs standing there so cold and calm one would think that they knew that this thing could not be done. Nor could it, while they showed the resolute bearing of masters. Nevertheless, said Captain Wilson, he believed that Sir Henry was the only man of all that group whose heart did not beat the quicker for the thought of the peril of those few moments.

Next instant the *subadar* gave a short command, and the muskets were lowered.

Lawrence approached the lines of the sepoy guard.

"I am going," he said, "to drive those scoundrels over there out of cantonments; take care while I am away that you all remain at your posts, and allow no one to do any damage here or to enter the house, or when I return I will hang you."

With these stern words Lawrence mounted his horse, and, followed by his suite, cantered off. Strange

to say, the sepoys of the guard were so dominated by those commands, that though mutiny and riot surged about them all that night, and comrades came tempting them to join them in their revolt, they remained at their posts, and the mess-house which they guarded was almost the only house in the cantonments which was neither burned nor plundered.

The cantonments were situated some two or three miles from the city of Lucknow itself, and to prevent the mutineers from entering the town and stirring up sedition in its crowded native quarter, Lawrence posted a strong European force across the road which led from the military quarters to the town. Meanwhile the mutineers rushed hither and thither in the cantonments, burning and plundering. Only one regiment, the 71st, took part in the active revolt that night, which was therefore not so formidable as if all the native troops had joined in the mutiny. Other of the sepoy regiments stole away during the night, either joining the rebels or dispersing to their homes. In all regiments, however, there were a few soldiers who were loyal to their salt, and in the morning it was found that between five and six hundred men of the three native infantry regiments declared themselves boldly for Lawrence sahib and the English.

The rest fled to the race-course, and thither, as soon as it was light, Lawrence marched in order to punish them. A few rounds of grapeshot, however, were enough for the rebels, who fled, being joined by

the bulk of the 7th Cavalry. In the afternoon a rising was attempted in the city itself, and the flag of the prophet waved over a mob of fanatics and *budmashes* looking for plunder; but the native police sufficed to quell this disturbance.

Within eleven days after the outbreak all the sepoys at the various small stations throughout Oudh had revolted. Some murdered their officers and other white people without remorse; others curtly ordered them to leave the place and did no harm to them. Still others protected them until they had reached Lucknow or some other place of safety, while some waylaid the fugitives and killed them. Many Europeans owed their lives to the kindness and protection of the villagers through whose lands they passed.

At Lucknow itself British authority was still dominant. Lawrence caused a gallows to be erected on the great fortress of Muchee Bhowan, where day after day mutineers were hanged after summary trial, and the many plots which began to be formed were quickly brought to naught owing to the vigilance of the native police, commanded by Captain Carnegy.

The anxiety caused by the rising, however, had so bad an effect on the health of Sir Henry Lawrence that he appointed his successors in case anything untoward should happen to himself. He then retired to his room, leaving the control of affairs in the hands of a council presided over by the financial commissioner, Martin Gubbins. Between this man and Lawrence

there was constant conflict of wills. Gubbins was a man of a masterful temper, full of ideas, sure of himself, and somewhat contemptuous of those who disagreed with him. He had always urged that Lawrence should disarm all the native troops, but the Governor had refused. Gubbins was tactless, quarrelsome, and insistent, but his chief, with more gentleness and urbanity, was just as firm. Now, however, that Lawrence was laid aside for a day or two, Gubbins got the council, of which he was the head, to agree to order the sepoys to disperse to their homes until the following November. On hearing of this measure, Lawrence dissolved the council and sent messengers recalling all those of the sepoys who wished to return at once. Five hundred came back, saying that they would stand by Lawrence sahib to the last. These men did indeed remain faithful to their word. "Neither temptation nor threats from their comrades without," runs the record of their loyalty, "nor hardships and privations within, could induce them to desert" during the terrible times of the siege. "There is nothing in the history of the sepoy army more creditable or honourable than their behaviour."

Mr Gubbins now advised that, instead of waiting in the Residency, Sir Henry Lawrence should march out with his forces and attack any bodies of mutineers to be found in the neighbourhood. It would have the effect, he said, not only of breaking up the rebels,

but of impressing them with the power of the English government. The younger officers were taken with the idea, and also urged this course upon their chief.

Sir Henry Lawrence allowed himself to be persuaded, and on the 29th of June, being informed that a large rebel force was reported to be advancing from the north-east towards Lucknow, he marched out at the head of his troops to meet them. From the very commencement everything was against the British. The little army, consisting of about 700 men, half of whom were native soldiers, were wearied with several days' harassing duty, and, by some oversight, had had no breakfast served out to them that morning. It had been arranged to start at daybreak, but the sun was high and fierce before they left the streets of Lucknow and, plodding wearily along, advanced to a place some four miles from the city.

As they approached a little village, a number of round-shot crashed in among the soldiers, and the enemy were revealed. The information possessed by Lawrence was to the effect that the sepoys did not number more than 5000, whereas in reality their number was three times as great. After some artillery firing on both sides the enemy attempted to outflank the British. The native gunners thereupon fled, and the Sikh cavalry also deserted. Added to this, the white soldiers and their loyal native

comrades were exhausted through want of food, and their arms were faulty. In the retreat which now was ordered an officer bade a soldier turn and fire. "It's no use, sir," was the reply, "I've snapped six caps already and the musket won't go off."

The retreat became a rout, the enemy's horse artillery harassing our men with an incessant fire. Some of the British were so dead beat that they deliberately threw themselves on the ground; but others of their comrades withdrew fighting desperately in little groups. The sepoys pursued eagerly, coming up closely and inflicting great losses. Lawrence rode hither and thither encouraging his men, but he was heard more than once crying out in his anxiety, "My God! I have brought them to this!"

At length the struggling mass of the British had reached an iron bridge over a stream by which they must reach Lucknow. The enemy's cavalry perceived that if they could occupy this before the broken army could reach it, the British would be overwhelmed. As they prepared to make a dash for the bridge-head, a troop of thirty British volunteer cavalry launched themselves at the serried ranks of the sepoys. With sabres flashing, and with a battle lust which would have done credit to seasoned fighters, this little band of English civilians, planters, clerks, and merchants hurled their meagre ranks at the sepoys. The latter, taken by surprise and terrified

by the savagery of the attack, broke and fled, leaving the bridge free. This was the one great act that redeemed the day of shame and disaster. The sepoys, however, made another attempt to rush the bridge when the last British were over, but they were checked by a trick, which in itself was a stroke of genius. The gunners had exhausted their ammunition, but Lawrence ordered the guns to be placed across the bridge and the gunners to stand with lighted portfires beside them, as if ready to blow to pieces the first sepoy that dared put foot on the bridge. The sight was enough for the rebels—they kept back, and thus the safe retreat of the British was assured. The total loss in this disaster was 112 men and 5 officers of the white troops, besides numerous native soldiers.

Lawrence had ridden forward with members of his suite to report the defeat, and as the broken remnants of the little army straggled up breathless, wounded, and exhausted, terror shook the nerves of many of those in the Residency, and the scene became one of confusion and tumult. Native labourers who had been busy trenching and making earthworks for the defence of the place threw down their tools and decamped, together with many servants; women ran here and there shrieking that the sepoys were coming, and seizing their children or each other they retreated, seeking out hiding-places, crying and sobbing, while men swore, and shouted orders here

and there, and tried to bring reason and calmness into the terrified mob. Some of the better-class women, however, were quite calm, and though expecting death from the victorious sepoys, showed great fortitude, and began to help the doctors with the wounded.

Meanwhile the vanguard of the rebels was coming forward, dragging their guns into place, or occupying neighbouring houses from which their musketry began to pour a fire into the confused masses of men in the open spaces within the fortified area of the Residency. All the rest of the day the sun poured its stifling radiance upon the courtyard into which shot and shell now crashed. Outside, in the narrow, sun-baked ways of the city, silence reigned; many of the townsmen and their families had fled, others joined the ranks of the mutineers, who drew more closely every hour the ring of fire about the frail bastions and earthworks of the Europeans.

For a time the women were appalled by the incessant cannonade of the rebels, the shouts of men, the rattle of volleys, and the shrieks and groans of the wounded. But after a time a better spirit came to them; many kneeled together and prayed, and after this felt calmer in spirit and became more helpful.

Thus began a siege famous among the famous sieges of the Mutiny, wherein a handful of Euro-

peans, filled with the fighting spirit of the master-race and the indomitable pride of Britain, made head against overwhelming forces of murderous rebels, and for all their miseries and wounds gave back blow for blow to the end and would never confess defeat.

CHAPTER XX

THE LEAGUER OF LUCKNOW

SIR HENRY LAWRENCE had hoped to defend not only the group of houses and compounds grouped under the name of the Residency, but also the strong old fort which stood half a mile to the north, called the Muchee Bhowan. Both were now surrounded by the rebels and were subjected to fierce cannonades. He now saw that it would be difficult to hold both positions with the slender force at his command, and therefore on the morning of July 1st a message was sent by semaphore to Colonel Palmer, commanding the troops at the fort, to the effect that he was to retire that night, blowing up all stores and ammunition.

All day the men in the fort were busied in piling up stores, gunpowder, and cartridges, which they made into a great heap in the middle of the fort. All the muskets they could not carry away they destroyed and the guns they spiked. At midnight, after lighting the fuse, the garrison quietly issued from the fort and made their way unchallenged to the Residency, the sepoys having dispersed to loot the city. Just as they reached this, and had been let in, with a roar and a shock that rocked the earth the Muchee Bhowan

leapt into the sky, the plunging flames lighting up the silent streets, shattering windows and walls of houses, and making the sepoys think that their doom had come.

Not all, however, had left the fort. An Irishman, a private of the 32nd, had been left drunk and asleep there. He had been blown into wakefulness and safety by the explosion, which had, however, stripped him of all his garments. He spent the night wandering about and hiding, and at dawn presented himself at the gate of the Residency, shouting in an aggrieved tone, "Arrah, now, open your dratted gates!"

At the Residency there was still great confusion. The siege had begun before the fortifications had been completed, and now native servants and labourers and English soldiers were to be seen working with feverish haste filling with earth bags or anything else that would hold, and building up rough walls to connect one building with another.

As already stated, the Residency was a collection of houses, gardens, and courtyards, or compounds. The buildings had been, in peaceful times, the residences of the principal officers attached to the suite of the Governor of Oudh, whose house, the Residency itself, stood to the north of the enclosure, opposite the Water Gate leading to the river Goomtee. To the right of the Governor's house was the Hospital and the Baillie Guard; south of this, and forming the eastern side of the defences, were Dr Fayrer's house, the Financial

Commissioner's office, and some other business houses, and finally, at the extreme southern point, was a two-storied dwelling which came to be known as Anderson's Garrison. Open courtyards with defensive walls, known as the Sikh's Square, formed the southern boundary of the position until, on the south-western angle, one came to Gubbins' House, north of which were the Racket Court, the Slaughter House, the Sheep Pen, and the Church, which stood to the north-west of the Residency. Further beyond this, forming a projecting bastion jutting right into the besiegers' position, was Innes' Post, which stood on a slight rise in the ground.

All these houses were contained in a space measuring a little over 2000 feet from north-west to south-east, and 1200 feet from east to west. Gradually, as the garrison worked their fierce defence into some sort of system, every defensible portion of the buildings and rough walls was manned by a few of the garrison, who fought for their own little bit of the fortifications without any reference to another part. Batteries were placed at convenient places, walls were loop-holed for musketry, and trenches were dug where necessary; but on the whole the place would never have been able to resist a systematic attack by artillery fire. The British gained as much by reason of the ignorance and want of military acumen of their foes as by their own stubborn heroism. As a matter of fact, the fortifications were never completed, for the

garrison had more than sufficient to do to beat off the incessant attacks of the sepoys, and to get what rest they could. Any diminution in the energy with which the defenders kept up their fire brought its penalty, for then the besiegers could advance and occupy the lower portions of partly demolished houses in the immediate neighbourhood, which were rarely distant more than the breadth of an ordinary street. From these points of vantage they could keep up a most galling fire.

Fourteen was the number of the posts which were constituted for the defence of the position. Within the enclosure thus defended were 535 men of the 32nd Foot, 50 of the 84th, 89 artillerymen, 100 English officers, 153 civilians, and 765 native soldiers, the loyalty of some of whom was not of a very durable character. The non-combatants comprised over 600 European women and children and 700 native servants. The actual fighting force was limited mainly to the Europeans, though there were 200 or 300 sepoys who were thoroughly reliable. On an average there were about 66 men to occupy each post, though almost every evening saw one or more brave fellows lying dead.

The fire of the insurgents seldom abated. Night and day they poured an incessant rain of round-shot, grape, and canister over the frail mud walls, and from the top stories of houses in the vicinity kept up a continuous hail of bullets upon the batteries.

Especially was the battery at the south-eastern extremity of the British position exposed to their fire. This was called the Cawnpore Battery, since it faced the road to the town where already the great tragedy was being enacted. So exposed was this position, that when the enemy really kept up their fire upon it the defenders had to hide, and only became active and offensive when the rebels' fire slackened somewhat.

With regard to the number of the assailants centred about these few acres of shot-torn houses and sun-baked and shell-ripped gardens and courtyards, estimates differ. Colonel Inglis, who took over the command after the death of Sir Henry Lawrence, states the number at about 8000, while others raise the figures to 100,000.

The siege began in force on the 1st of July, and thenceforth for eighty days the crashing of round-shot, the shaking of walls, the fall of bricks and masonry, the rending of wood, the shriek and explosion of shells, and the cries and groans of wounded were never to be absent from the consciousness of the men, women, and children cooped up in the narrow space.

One of the first to find death was Sir Henry Lawrence himself. He had occupied a top room in the Residency itself, which afforded a good view of the proceedings of the rebels, but which was in consequence a good mark for their gunners. They may even have known from their spies in the British camp

that Sir Henry used this chamber. On the morning of the 1st he was seated in this room talking to his secretary when a shell crashed through the window and burst within the room. No one, strangely enough, was hurt, but all the members of his staff were anxious that his precious existence should be saved from such dangers. They all urged him to change his quarters. For some time he demurred, saying with a laugh that no sepoy gunner would be so expert as to hit the room again in the same spot. At length, however, he was persuaded, and promised that he would go elsewhere when he had arranged for moving his papers.

The following morning he went out to see to the arrangements for disposing the forces which had come in from the Muchee Bhowan, and on getting back to his room about eight o'clock he lay down on his bed, while he discussed business with Captain Wilson. George Lawrence, nephew of the Governor, was lying down near-by, and on the floor sat a native pulling the punkah. Suddenly, with a deafening roar and a flash of flame, a shell burst into the room. "There was an instant's darkness," wrote George Lawrence, "and a kind of red glare and a blast as of thunder. I found myself uninjured, though covered with bricks from top to toe." Wilson had his clothes torn from his body, but was himself untouched.

No one spoke for a little while; then Wilson said, "Sir Henry, are you hurt?" He had to repeat his question and still there was no reply. Then, in

a low tone, Lawrence replied, "I am killed." The dust and smoke slowly cleared away, and then it was seen that the white coverlet of the bed was deeply dyed with his blood. Dr Fayrer was quickly called and found that the lower part of his body was shattered. Death was clearly not far off. Some men of the 32nd were called in, and, gently lifting him, they carried him to Dr Fayrer's house, and laid him in a verandah sheltered from the fire of the rebels. Nevertheless, it appeared that they quickly learned whither he had been moved, and the house became the mark of a fierce cannonade.

For the next thirty-six hours Lawrence remained conscious, suffering much pain in spite of the opiates given to him in order to deaden the agony. Friends clustered about the bed, many with tears, but the most unmoved among them was the dying man himself. He spoke of himself with the humility that had been his dominant trait throughout life, and, speaking of his burial, he desired that no epitaph should be graven upon his tomb, but only the words, "Here lies Henry Lawrence, who tried to do his duty. May the Lord have mercy on his soul." He also wished a verse of Scripture to be added to this inscription: "To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against Him." He would like this "because," he said in tender tones, "it is on my dear wife's tomb." For the rest he bade them bury him "without any fuss, and in the

same grave with any man of the garrison who may die at the same time."

He had remembrance for all who had come into personal contact with him, even including the native servants who had performed their hardly-noticed duties about him; and he sent for all those who were still alive, whom he thought he had ever wronged by act or word, or to whom he had ever spoken in anger, to beg for their forgiveness. One of his chief anxieties was for the due conduct of the defence. He gathered his chief officers about his bed, and advised them as to what they should do when he had gone. He gave the office of Chief Commissioner to Major Banks, and to Colonel Inglis he entrusted the military command. His passionate advice, frequently repeated, was, "Never surrender—never surrender. Let every man die at his post, but never make terms."

On the evening of the 2nd he received the sacrament with his intimate friends, and the service was held on the verandah where he lay, to the accompaniment of the booming of cannon, the bursting of shells, the crackle of musketry, and the mocking cries of the combatants shouted in shrill Urdu or coarse Anglo-Saxon. After this he spoke but little more, for his strength was giving out slowly. Yet he lasted throughout the day of the 3rd, and died only in the early hours of the 4th.

He was buried while yet it was dark. A few men of the 32nd were brought in, and reverently, before

they lifted the couch, they kissed the forehead of the dead chieftain. Then they carried him out, they only assisting, since at the time an attack was raging with redoubled fury on all sides, and no officers could be spared to pay the last sad rites of sepulture. He was laid in the earth side by side, as was his request, with the dead soldiers who that day had laid down their lives for the honour of Britain and the defence of their dear ones. Then, with a short prayer, the earth was piled above him, while the roar of cannon sounded his requiem.

Sir Henry Lawrence had thought that it might be possible to defend the Residency successfully for at most a fortnight. As already mentioned, it was the fact that in a military sense the place was impossible to defend against an organized attack. Even allowing for the distaste of the rebels for stubborn and sanguinary assaults, the conditions of attack gave every advantage to the sepoys. They had an overwhelming quantity and weight of guns, and their men were constantly being replaced by fresh arrivals. The defenders, on the other hand, had constantly to be on the alert, and when they slept they lay down near-by in their clothes, with their muskets beside them, and were constantly called up to take their part in resisting attack or beating down the fire of the enemy.

The latter, from many houses in the vicinity, kept up an incessant rifle-fire, and thus they made it of

the greatest danger for any one of the defenders to show themselves. In the first few days of the siege the toll of these rebel sharp-shooters amounted to between fifteen and twenty deaths per day. After this orders were distributed in the following terms: "Keep under cover, be always on the alert, and never fire a shot unless you can see your man." The only drawback to following such orders was that the second portion could not be fulfilled without breaking the first requirement, and while a soldier was aiming his piece at a rebel, he very frequently exposed himself to the fire of another marksman. No spot within the defences could be called safe, seeing that every portion was commanded from some point or other, and at no time was the daily average of fatalities from rebel sharp-shooters less than ten. Wounded soldiers were shot dead as they lay in hospital, and women, sleeping through the thunder and crackle of guns by night, awoke to find bullets lying on the floor within a few inches of their bodies.

In one especial manner the general order stated above was broken every day, when some daring spirit, at the head of a little band of five or six equally daring men, crept over the low wall of sand-bags, and, stealing up to some particular gun which had harassed them, would suddenly dash at the gunners, sabre or bayonet them, and then, having spiked the gun itself, would dash back to cover. Or they would take a bag or two of gunpowder, and running silently up to a house

from which sharp-shooters had been annoying them, would burst in the door, bayonet the sepoys holding the house, and then, throwing in the bags of explosive with a lighted fuse attached, would depart. Next moment the house would leap up in ruin, and another 'coign of vantage' would be lost to the besiegers.

These sorties were the delight of the more adventurous of the many brave fellows forming the British garrison. One of these was a private of the 32nd, named Cooney, an Irishman, who loved fighting for its own sake. He became particularly expert and daring in his favourite sport. Once, leaping with one companion over the wall of a sepoy battery, he emulated the exploit of Captain Moore at the Cawnpore entrenchments a fortnight or so before, and by calling out "Right and left, extend!" made the rebels believe that a whole company of sahibs was about to overwhelm them. The mutineers fled helter-skelter, whereupon Cooney and his friend did all possible damage in the battery at their leisure.

One of the narrators of the siege says: "Cooney's exploits were marvellous. He was backed by a sepoy named Kandiel, who simply adored him. Single-handed, and without any orders, Cooney would go outside our position, and he knew more about the enemy's movements than anybody else. Over and over again he was put into the guardroom for 'disobedience to orders,' and as often let out when there was fighting to be done. On one occasion he surprised

one of the enemy's batteries into which he crawled, followed by his faithful sepoy, bayoneting four men and spiking the guns. He was often wounded, and several times left his bed to volunteer for a sortie."

A particularly deadly form of attack made by the rebels was by mining. A hole was sunk in the earth under cover, and then a tunnel was dug leading toward the entrenchments of the Residency. When it had been excavated far enough, stores of powder were inserted at the end beneath the defences of the white men, and, being exploded, a breach would be made, through which an overwhelming attack might be made.

An assault of great fierceness was made in this way on the 20th July, when an attack was delivered upon two places at once, namely, on Innes' House and on the Redan, both of which posts jutted out into the enemy's position. Both attacks were developed at eight o'clock in the morning, and were fiercely sustained, and as stubbornly repulsed, until four o'clock in the afternoon. While the sepoys sent fresh men time after time to carry on the action, the garrison of Innes' House consisted of Ensign Loughnan of the 13th Native Infantry, twelve soldiers of the 32nd, and some clerks. These few heroic fellows repulsed an attack made in overwhelming numbers.

Two other similar attacks were made on August 10th and September 5th, one against the Cawnpore Battery and the other against the Sikh's Square, the

latter of which almost succeeded. Here a mine exploded, throwing down some thirty feet of the poor defences and swallowing several of the British in its ruins. A sepoy officer dashed forward, mounted the breach and actually stepped within the defences, but next moment he tumbled back a corpse, and notwithstanding the fierceness with which the others followed, they would not face the withering fire of the British, and retired sullenly.

One day it was suddenly discovered that the sepoys had gained entrance into a lane on the outskirts of the defences, and that only a screen of canvas separated them from the defenders. Martin Gubbins went to the loophole which commanded the lane, and shot down any sepoy who attempted to cross it. While standing there he heard the voice of a European behind him, and without turning his head he asked the newcomer to have the wall in the rear of the mutineers loopholed and that musketry should be opened upon them. The person behind him was Major Banks, the Chief Commissioner. He approached the place where Gubbins stood to get a sight of the enemy, and while looking out a sepoy shot him through the temples. He fell and instantly died, while Gubbins resumed his post, which he kept for two hours until the breach in the defences had been made good.

The death of Major Banks, who was Lawrence's successor, was a serious loss. A fortnight before, Gubbins, with the rasping insistence on his own value

which generally disgusted everybody, had written to Major Banks saying that the post of Chief Commissioner should rightly be his, and on the death of Banks he insisted that he should succeed him. Inglis, however, did not relish the thought of working with an official so conceited and self-assertive, and decided that the office should remain in abeyance until it was possible to learn the views of the Government upon the matter.

The success of the garrison in repulsing the attack on the 20th July had greatly encouraged the Europeans. They felt that in spite of the overwhelming numbers of the rebels, their own grit and determination made up for the meagre forces they could bring to bear against their enemies. All were anxious, however, to learn what was being done outside to bring forces to their relief. A sepoy pensioner named Ungud had volunteered to get news, and on the 21st of July this man, having succeeded in reaching Havelock, now returned and made his way through the enemy's sentries and clambered into the entrenchment. Eager faces and anxious lips instantly surrounded him, asking for his news. This was good, and was to the effect that Havelock had defeated the Nana Sahib in three engagements, and was now in possession of Cawnpore itself.

This news was a great relief to the British. Every day they had expected to hear yells of exultation rise from the rebels' camp, telling them that the Nana's

army had come to swell the hordes which were besieging them. Next day Ungud went out bearing a letter to Havelock, telling him all the news concerning the Residency and its siege. The messenger returned three days later with Havelock's reply, to the effect that within a week the army of deliverance would be scattering the besiegers.

The week passed, but the promised relief did not come, and men began to lose heart. Their toils and troubles were indeed hard to bear. Their ranks were thinned more and more, not only by the bullets of the enemy, but by the ravages of disease. And their extraordinary and unceasing privations gave sickness an easy conquest over wearied brains and exhausted bodies. In the first days of the siege the average time spent on duty each day amounted to from thirteen to twenty hours, but this tended to become longer, and the constant watch and work became more exacting as their comrades fell about them and left the survivors to fulfil the duties of the dead and sick. After spending the burning hours of the day at their posts, with every nerve a-stretch, their nights were passed in digging up stores, distributing food and ammunition, burying the dead, digging trenches, and in repairing their defences. When they slept, their heavy slumbers were punctuated by constant alarms. Officers and men performed the like work, but still the hardships increased.

The rainy season added to their toils and their

discomforts, for the rains wetted them through and through, and often they stood guard in water-logged trenches. All the comforts which at ordinary times enabled Europeans to bear with ease the hardships of the climate were absent. They were attacked by legions of flies, which harassed them while they tried to sleep, and polluted their food when they snatched a meal. The British soldiers had little if any rum or tobacco, and the loyal natives were in as hard a case, for they had none of the sweets and sauces which are so essential to their comfort.

Many of the natives believed that the doom of the white people was inevitable, and fearing to be overwhelmed with them, they deserted. A whole company of them who had charge of a portion of the defences were found to have gone over to the enemy one night, leaving as their excuse the words scrawled on a wall, "Because we have no opium." It is said that the rebels showed them no mercy, but shot them all, and used their blood for sacrificial purposes.

Throughout these terrible experiences the characters of most of the women shone with the clear light of courage and fortitude. During the most savage attacks, when shells and musket-fire and round-shot were crashing and roaring about the place, and when they never knew from one moment to another whether the sepoys would not overwhelm their defenders and sweep through the place, murdering all, they went about their work calmly, attending to

the wounded or doing the menial tasks which the desertion of native servants had forced upon them. Once, it is related, they amused themselves by singing part-songs while a particular house was being made the point of a more than usually fierce artillery attack.

Many of the women had persuaded their husbands to promise to kill them if the enemy should get in. Dr Fayrer was asked by several men to give them poison for their wives in case this disaster should happen, but he refused their request. Martin Gubbins relates that an officer came to him one evening and confided to him that he had promised his wife that if the sepoys captured the position he would shoot her, and as a mark of his esteem he was willing to do the same for Mrs Gubbins, if desired.

The sepoys were continually driving mines toward the British defences, and the garrison was forced to sink counter-mines. By these and other means they constantly brought the designs of the rebels to naught. One man particularly, a Captain Fulton, developed a strangely sensitive intuition as to the places where the sepoys were employed in digging their tunnels. He was assisted by some soldiers of the 32nd who had been Cornish miners, and as soon as they learned that a rebel mine was being dug, these began digging also. Again and again Fulton descended the shaft thus made, and waited, listening for the pick and shovel of the sepoys working

busily a foot or two away. When their crowbars pierced the thin partition of soil, he burst through upon them pistol in hand and chased them away or killed them, afterward blowing up the tunnel and thus confounding their designs. Once he was down below, and he heard some one ask whether he was in the mine. "Yes, sir," replied the sergeant; "there he's been for the last two hours, like a terrier at a rat-hole, and not likely to leave it either all day." Martin Gubbins described this officer as "the life and soul of everything that was persevering, chivalrous, and daring," and deserving to be called "the Defender of Lucknow."

This gallant man, who laughed at danger and enjoyed the tussle with death, did not survive the siege. His death is thus described by Captain Birch, who has left a narrative of these sad, brave days at Lucknow:

"The death of this brilliant officer was occasioned by one of the most curious of wounds. He had been inspecting a new battery in an earthwork opposite Mr Gubbins' house. He was lying at full length in one of the embrasures, with a telescope in his hand. He turned his face, with a smile on it, and said, 'They are just going to fire,' and sure enough they did. The shot took away the whole of the back of Captain Fulton's head, leaving his face like a mask still on his neck. When he was laid out on his back on a bed, we could not see how he had been killed. His

was the most important loss we had sustained after that of Sir Henry Lawrence."

The attack made by the rebels on the 18th of August was one of the most determined character. Their mine destroyed a large part of the defences, blew up a shed, and tossed two officers and three sentries into the air. The officers and two of the men fell on the garrison side of the wall, but the third man fell among the mutineers and was instantly slain. When the smoke cleared away, it showed the rebels on one side of the breach, and the Europeans, with grimed, fierce faces, waiting on the other side. The insurgents hesitated, as if the terrible looks of the handful of sahibs daunted them. Then a native officer sprang to the top of the ruined wall, waving his sword and calling upon his men to follow. He, and another who sprang after him, were instantly shot down; and the rest hesitated.

While this had been going on, however, other rebels had crept up and had seized a house which had been exposed by the breach and were soon holding it in strong force. It would be a most dangerous and costly job to attempt to dislodge them, and though Brigadier Inglis was warned by his officers that the effort would be impossible of success, he could not suffer a portion of his position to be held by the rebels. Resolutely, therefore, the commander brought up his little reserve band of eighteen heroes, formed a barricade behind which he stationed a gun to enfilade

the house, and battered the place all day with round-shot and musket-ball. Then when he had thus prepared for assault, he sent his reserve forward. They dashed into the house with bayonets fixed, and in a little while had slain or driven out all the rebels. Then the breach was repaired and the British position was safe again.

Thus the siege went on, until, instead of fourteen days, the period which Sir Henry Lawrence had thought it possible they might hold out, sixty-seven days had elapsed. Relief seemed as far off as ever, for by this time they had heard, through messages brought in by Ungud, that Havelock, by reason of his small forces and the fierce opposition of the rebels in his path, had had to retire more than once. On the 29th of August Ungud had brought a letter in which, while not stating the fact in set terms, the General allowed it to be understood that he feared he could not reach them for another three weeks. He added, "Do not negotiate, but rather perish sword in hand." At last, on the 16th of September, Ungud went out again with despatches for Havelock, telling him of the sore straits in which disease and death by the hands of the enemy was reducing the little garrison and their charge of precious lives of women and children.

CHAPTER XXI

HAVELOCK'S MARCH

WHEN General Havelock left Calcutta on the 25th of June to lead his little army from Allahabad to Lucknow there were many carping critics who said that a man with so weedy a figure and haggard a face would quickly come to grief in the troubles and hardships of the campaign. Such critics looked only on the surface, they knew nothing of the stern soul beneath the frail exterior.

Outside India and its army no one had heard of Henry Havelock when, at the date mentioned, he was given command of the column sent to follow up Neill, and relieve Cawnpore and Lucknow. He was a man who had grown old in the service of Mars, but whose even greater strength and purpose had been given to the service of his God. He had fought in many battles during the forty-one years of his military life — in Burma, Afghanistan, and the Punjab he had, while naturally shrinking and timid, acted so that men had been forced to say: "Havelock fears nothing."

Keen brains had noticed his strong character and his exceptional gifts of leadership, and what had been

said of Nicholson had also been said of Havelock: "If ever India should be in danger," declared Sir Henry Hardinge, "the Government have only to place Havelock at the head of the army and it will be saved." Both prophecies were in great measure to be fulfilled.

He was somewhat below the middle height, of a slight frame, but upright and alert, instinct with spirit. His hair was grey or iron grey, his forehead high and square, his nose aquiline, his lips resolutely compressed, and his powerful jaw covered by a beard. His eyes looked straight into yours with a bright, piercing expression, but on the whole his aspect was calm and serene.

He was intensely religious, but not bigoted in any way. He had the religious character of many officers at that time, but he did not force his convictions on others, and was broad-minded enough to appreciate others who were not of his way of thinking. Many harum-scarum young officers liked him, and for all that he had none of the easy manners and amiability that made other officers beloved, his stiffness and reserve were known to cover qualities which gained him respect on all sides. He had an intense sense of duty, both to his God and to his superiors. All his life, by constant reading, study, and thinking he had educated himself to become a great commander; but time after time he had seen younger or less deserving men advanced before him in position.

He had no family influence, no great friends to push him forward; but disappointment and chagrin never made him neglectful of his duty. It was God's will that official superiors should slight his claims; it was his duty to wait patiently for whatsoever God had in store for him.

It was said that he could describe from memory every one of the battles fought by Marlborough, Frederick the Great, Napoleon, and Wellington, and could criticize each and all of their evolutions. This was one of his two great subjects of enthusiasm; the other, of course, was his religious convictions. He had two ambitions: one to do well the duty which God gave to him to do, whatever it was; the other was to command a British army in an important campaign. After forty-one years of obscure military life his great desire was given to him, and he grasped the opportunity with all the nerve, the enthusiasm, the delight of a young subaltern.

Havelock's march upon Cawnpore has already been described. It was a march which suffered no reverse, but knew only victories. Having reached Cawnpore, however, and found that he had come too late to save from agony and murder the poor souls whose bodies now lay in the well, the reaction came upon both the General and his troops. The severe losses suffered by the soldiers, and the sense of the tragedy which they had come too late to prevent, depressed the men greatly, and on the night when

they first occupied Cawnpore, gloom was upon all. The only sound was the dirge of the pibrochs as the Highlanders laid their dead in the ground; and in the General's quarters, as he and his officers sat at dinner, there was sadness upon all. But only for a time: victory had been given to him in abundance, but there was still work to do, the English name had still to be upheld, and its cause—the cause of slaughtered women and little ones—was a just one. "After all," he said, turning to his son, "if the worst comes to the worst, we can but die with our swords in our hands." In other words, he had at least the brave man's consolation, that whatever it cost, he and his comrades could do their duty to the uttermost.

Within a week he had crossed the wide and swift-flowing Ganges, and with his little army was in Oudh, advancing in the direction of Lucknow. His first engagement was at Onao. It was a fierce battle, for he had to deal with people who for generations had been fighters in local feuds. Every house was a citadel and every village a walled city. The position could not be turned, but had to be taken by a frontal attack. Suddenly, under the British cannonade, the houses began burning, but still the rebels stuck to their guns, and fought even while they scorched in the fire. On the same day, advancing a few more miles, he won another victory, the loss to the British in the two battles being only 88, compared to the rebels' 400.

Though victorious, there were considerations which forced him to retire. Great inroads had been made upon his army by cholera, exhaustion, and exposure; the fierceness with which the enemy fought also warned him that, at the rate at which he was proceeding, his force would be reduced to insignificance before he could reach Lucknow, and he would be overwhelmed. His officers murmured against his decision, and Neill, left in command at Cawnpore, wrote an indignant letter in such terms that Havelock in his reply said that only consideration for the public service prevented him from placing Neill under arrest.

Havelock resolved to await reinforcements, which he had heard were hastening to him from Calcutta. But now he was disgusted to hear that, owing to mutiny having broken out in Behar, the forces could not reach him for about two months. Before definitely retreating, however, he turned swiftly upon the rallying rebels, and inflicted a sound thrashing upon them, so that they should realize that though the British retreated they were still not to be despised.

On the 13th of August Havelock recrossed the Ganges, and thus the first attempt to relieve Lucknow failed. But it was a noble failure; the retreat was decided upon wisely, in spite of the sullen discontent of the men, the opposition of most of his officers, and the violently expressed disgust of Neill. If Havelock had persisted in the attempt to relieve

Lucknow, disaster would have been inevitable. He therefore sacrificed his present reputation to what thoughtful critics have since recognized were the best interests of British prestige in that terrible time.

It was not long before his resolve to retire received justification not only from Neill himself, but from events. About a week after Neill had vehemently urged him to continue his advance to Lucknow, that General wrote urgently asking Havelock to come at once to his rescue, as some 4000 rebels had rallied at Bithoor, some miles from Cawnpore, and were threatening the city.

His force greatly needed rest; many of the men, exhausted by their efforts, were depressed; but Havelock told them plainly that until the rebels at Bithoor were dispersed no repose could be expected. With what spirit they could muster, therefore, his little army marched out of Cawnpore on the 16th of August, and after proceeding for eight hours under a blazing sky, they found the enemy in a strong position behind a breastwork, protected by great guns which were served with marked accuracy and effect. In spite of their fatigue and depression, the British soldiers, in this case as ever, showed that where dash and grit were necessary they could always draw upon a reserve of strength and pluck; and being given the word, they dashed at the position, and after severe fighting, in the course of which the men of the 42nd Native Infantry crossed bayonets with

the British, the enemy was driven through the streets and out of the town.

When, after this, his ninth victory in succession, Havelock returned to Cawnpore, a copy of the Government Gazette was placed in his hand, from the pages of which he learned that he had been superseded in the command of the column to relieve Lucknow by Sir James Outram. The Government, after blinding itself to the stupendous character of the mutiny, now expected its commanding officers to perform lightning-like miracles in suppressing the revolt, and if they could not perform impossibilities with the meagre forces it gave them, it dismissed them curtly. Not a word of grateful recognition of Havelock's services softened the unexpected blow, and while the people of England admired and praised him for his pluck, endurance, and energy, the Government 'dropped' him in chill displeasure.

Whatever chagrin Havelock suffered at this curt dismissal, it was probably tempered by the knowledge that at least the officer who replaced him was a man of sterling worth as a soldier, and of genial character as a man. Outram was known as the 'Bayard of India,' and the title reveals the chivalry, the honesty, and manly virtues of the man who endeared himself not only to his officers and soldiers, but to the natives, both high and low. He was no champion of a particular class, creed, or race. He was as courteous and kind to a soldier's wife or child as to a lady of

rank or a young princeling. Injustice was the one thing he would not suffer to be done, whether to noble or to the meanest road-sweeper, and the purity of his motives was shown by his indifference to official or public censure when he took up a cause which he knew was just.

Meanwhile Havelock waited at Cawnpore, endeavouring to strengthen his position there. He was, however, in great danger. Enemies were gathering on all sides, and unless reinforcements speedily reached him he feared that he would have to retreat to Allahabad, a step which would have been fatal for British supremacy. It was not until a month had passed since the battle of Bithoor that Sir James Outram entered Havelock's fortified camp just outside Cawnpore, and the two officers, who had long been brothers-in-arms, joined hands and discussed the position.

On the following day, the 16th September, Outram published an order which, as Sir Colin Campbell said, has seldom been issued by a Commander-in-Chief. It stated that it was due to Havelock, and to the strenuous and noble exertions which he had made to effect the relief of Lucknow, that the honour of that achievement should continue to be entrusted to him. It went on: "The Major-General, therefore, in gratitude for, and admiration of, the brilliant deeds in arms achieved by General Havelock and his gallant troops, will cheerfully waive his rank on the

occasion, and will accompany the force to Lucknow in his civil capacity as Chief Commissioner of Oudh, tendering his military services to General Havelock as a volunteer."

In thus stepping aside and allowing to Havelock the performance of an achievement which would make him the object of a nation's whole-hearted hero-worship, Outram was showing that the chivalric reputation which had gained him the name of the 'Bayard of India' was no empty one.

Joining their forces, Havelock and Outram left Cawnpore on the 21st September. Their total army consisted of 3179 men and 18 guns. They now made more rapid progress than had been the case on Havelock's first advance, for the enemy remembered the severe thrashings they had suffered, and retreated until they reached a palace in a walled park south of Lucknow, called the Alambagh. Here the rebels made a stand for a time. Swamps protected one flank, while the other rested on the palace. The British advanced on a narrow front for some distance, being unable to open out owing to the marshy ground. When once this obstacle was passed, and the guns raced forward, the enemy began to yield, and a final bayonet charge by the 5th Foot scattered them.

It was decided to hold the Alambagh, since it could be easily defended. A garrison of 250 men was left here, and the main army then attacked the great problem of fighting its way to the relief of the

Residency through the narrow lanes and streets of Lucknow itself. The first position they had to force after leaving the Alambagh was a bridge, the Charbagh Bridge, over a canal. At every step of the way they were under fire, but in spite of this they marched steadily on, closing up their ranks as the dead and wounded dropped or staggered to the rear.

At a turn of the road a perfect tempest of shot and shell swept their ranks; but on the command being given the men lay down, and waited for the guns under Captain Maude to be brought into position. Only two could be worked in the narrow road, and with these Maude had to hold the fire of six, which the mutineers had placed beyond the Charbagh Bridge. At the same time, from the houses which commanded the approach to the bridge, a hail of musket-balls poured on the British artillerymen. Again and again Maude had to call for volunteers from the infantry-men to take the places of the men who were shot down while serving the guns. Outram received a shot in the arm, but he had it bound up, and then led a party of men into a garden on the right in order to make a flank attack upon the sepoy gunners.

Time passed, while men served the roaring guns or fell wounded at their posts, and still no sound of firing came from the garden. General Neill was commanding the first brigade. Seeing his men falling so quickly beside him, Maude became impatient, and said to Havelock's son, Henry, who stood by him,

"For Heaven's sake, do something!" The young man rode up to Neill and asked whether they could not rush the bridge with the bayonet, but Neill would not move without orders. Havelock rode off as if to get orders from his father, then, when out of sight, he turned his horse, and riding furiously back he reined up before General Neill and said, as though he came direct from General Havelock, "You are to carry the bridge at once, sir."

Almost at once the bridge was crossed by a body of eager soldiers, led by young Havelock, Arnold, and Tytler. A crash of cannon-shot swept the bridge, leaving only Havelock and a soldier untouched. For a few moments young Havelock, the centre of a storm of bullets, stood waving his sword and calling the men to follow him. Next moment the British swept on and across the bridge, while the sepoys feverishly struggled to reload their guns. But too late: the bayonets were at their breasts, the fierce eyes of the *sahib-log* were looking into their faces, and the grim work was done. The bridge was captured.

On pressed the army through the streets, met by a withering fire converging upon them from all sides. Within three-quarters of a mile of the Residency they were met by a tempest of shot from guns located in a palace called the Kaisarbagh. To this they replied as best they could, and then pushed on until they reached shelter under the walls of two palaces called the Fureed Buksh and the Chutter Munzil.

One long, winding, narrow lane, the most dangerous and shot-swept of all, lay before them, and through this they must pass to the beleaguered people in the Residency. Here there was hesitation: should they camp here and rest for the night, or should they press on? Outram, on his big horse, a splash of blood across his face, his arm in a sling, was for waiting till the morning. Havelock, quick, eager, and full of enthusiasm, walked up and down beside Outram's horse, with short, agitated steps. He was for going on. At length it was decided to press forward.

Meanwhile in the city there was terror. Crowds of natives, both citizens and sepoys, thinking that their doom was near, now that the fierce sahibs—some dressed like women, to show that they had come to exact a bitter vengeance for the white ladies and children done to death—had pressed their way again into the city, began to stream out of the streets, seeking hiding-places from the avenging swords and rifles. Many sepoys remained, however, and now that the British were nearly upon them and were about to snatch their prey from their hands, they redoubled their fury of attack upon the entrenchments and defences that for so many brave weeks had resisted all their attacks. While the white men stood at their posts, returning fire for fire, the women walked nervously up and down the rooms of the houses. Since the morning they had heard the roar of the guns of their approaching friends, and at the sounds had striven

to guess where they were, and whether the battle went against them or brought them nearer.

From a room in one of the taller houses they could now measure the progress of the advance of their friends by the fury which seemed to possess the sepoys on the house-tops, as they saw the white men forcing their way through the winding, narrow lane which led to the Baillie Guard. From the roofs the rebels poured down musket-balls into the advancing column, from each cross street came a transverse fire, but still the Highlanders pressed on, shooting, bayoneting, and shouting as they came.

At length, in the twilight and the smoke, the head of the column could be seen from the Residency walls, and a shout of welcome and exultation rang out along the frail defences that had so long withstood the waves of murderous sepoys. The cry was answered from the strong throats of the Highlanders at the head of the column; figures on horseback began to appear through the drifting smoke, the bayonets of the soldiers gleamed, and the dark plumes of the Scotsmen waved over the ranks of tanned faces as the rescuers pressed forward. Here they were now, and another shout arose, as the women and children, running from their various places of shelter, came together in the porch of Dr Fayrer's house, tears in their eyes, their voices shaking, their words of thankfulness to God only half articulate.

The besiegers dragged aside a gun in Aitken's

Battery, and through the opening thus made poured the eager column, preceded by Outram on his waler; next came the glad faces of the Highlanders, and Havelock and his staff, and then the dark, serious faces of the Sikhs, and again the pink and brown laughing looks of the British Fusiliers. The enthusiasm of the Highlanders was answered by the gratefulness of the garrison. The Scotsmen went up to every one they met, asking, "Are you one of them?" "Yes," was the answer; "God bless you"; then the hearty handshake. One Highlander with a laugh said, "We feared we should only find your bones."

The whole of the rescuing party were borne forward to Dr Fayrer's house, where Sir James Outram had preceded them. Here stood the women and children, full of excitement and grateful joy. The Highlanders, pressing forward, grasped the hands of the ladies, replying to their trembling words of gratitude and praise with rough and cheerful congratulations. The children they snatched up in their arms and, with tears running down their bearded faces, kissed them fondly, saying how glad they were that they had saved them from the fate of those at Cawnpore. Then, when the first flush of excitement was past, the soldiers turned and spoke among themselves of the comrades whom they had lost upon the way, and gloom took the place of joy. But all through that evening the thoroughfares of the Residency were thronged with people, seeking friends and relatives either among



Highlanders at Lucknow
W. H. Overend

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the relieving troops or in the garrison, and there was much eager conversation and many anxious inquiries for news of this friend or that. During 113 days, since the date of the outbreak at Cawnpore, the garrison had received but the smallest scraps of news, and the sad fates of many they knew were only revealed now, when salvation had come to themselves.

In his successful attempt to relieve Lucknow Havelock had lost 535 killed and wounded, this being about a sixth of the total force with which he had crossed the Ganges at Cawnpore.

Having regard to the large number of women and children and wounded whom it would be necessary to guard through the terrible streets, to the want of means of conveyance, and the insufficiency of the troops at his disposal for so great a task, it was decided by Sir James Outram, who now assumed command, that it would be wiser to hold the Residency and to wait for the greater relieving force which would advance as soon as their plight was known. Outram divided his forces into two parts. One portion, under Brigadier Inglis, still continued the defence of the Residency; the other, under Havelock, was sent to seize and establish itself in the palaces along the lane to the east, by which the column had fought its way into Lucknow. The latter work was done in three days, and thereafter the British troops were able to hold their own against the 60,000 mutineers surrounding them in something like ease

and security. The sepoys still kept up a vigorous siege, and continued their mining operations both against the Residency and the palaces held by Havelock, but with the greater forces now against them the rebels could do little damage, but suffered a good deal themselves. Thus for another eight weeks, with little trouble, the British more than held their own, until the arrival of Sir Colin Campbell, whose campaign is now to be described, enabled them to evacuate Lucknow. Delhi had already fallen on the 20th September, five days before Havelock and Outram entered the Residency; and the second relief of Lucknow was to be practically the last great event in the suppression of the Mutiny.

CHAPTER XXII

"THE CAMPBELLS ARE COMING"

THE Home Government had by this time become convinced of the serious nature of the outbreak in the Indian army, and were taking all measures for its speedy suppression. Troops were being rushed from Great Britain, and at Calcutta great quantities of stores, guns, and ammunition were being collected. The best soldier of the time, Sir Colin Campbell, who had highly distinguished himself in the Crimean War of 1854 and 1855, was appointed Commander-in-Chief, and set out from England within twenty-four hours of his appointment. He was not a great strategist, and was not so great a military scholar as Havelock, but he had the fire and the caution of a good Highlander, was a capable organizer, and had an extraordinary power of exciting devotion in the men serving under him. In appearance he was spare and soldierly, with high, rugged forehead, over which hung crisp grey hair. His eyes were keen and honest; they could blaze in the sudden irascibility of a Scotsman, or soften in humour and kindliness.

It was not until the 27th of October that, having collected the troops composing his column, and sent

them off on the road to Allahabad and Cawnpore, Sir Colin set out himself to take command. He arrived at Cawnpore on the 3rd November, whence, in spite of the news he then received to the effect that a powerful force of mutineers, said to be invincible, known as the Gwalior contingent, was gathering to attack Cawnpore, he determined to push on to the relief of Lucknow. The troops had already crossed the Ganges, and one of the soldiers has left it on record that the sight of the blood-soaked floor of the 'murder-house,' and the partially covered bodies in the well at Cawnpore, had filled him and his comrades with the bitterest feelings against the sepoys. Every man in the regiment, the 93rd Highlanders, was determined to risk his life to save the women and children in the Residency of Lucknow from the fate suffered by those at Cawnpore. The cowardly treachery of the enemy and their barbarous murders had indeed made the men resolve that they would give no quarter.

When the army had reached a plain about five miles south of the Alambagh, where the Lucknow garrison had an outpost, Sir Colin Campbell reviewed his troops. They numbered less than 5000, but they were all of the best mettle. Some of them had fought at Delhi, and on the breasts of 700 out of the 1100 of the 93rd Highlanders gleamed the Crimean medal. The following description by an eye-witness brings the whole force vividly before the eyes—

"The Campbells are Coming"

"The field-guns from Delhi looked blackened and service-worn; but the horses were in good condition and the harness in perfect repair; the gunners bronzed, stalwart, and in perfect fighting case. The 9th Lancers, with their gallant bearing, their flagless lances, and their lean but hardy horses, looked the perfection of regular cavalry on active service. Wild and bold was the bearing of the Sikh horsemen, clad in loose, fawn-coloured dress, with long boots, blue or red turbans and sashes, and armed with carbine and *tulwar*. Next to them were the worn and wasted remains of the 8th and 75th Queen's, who, with wearied air, stood grouped under their colours. Then came the two regiments of Punjab infantry, tall of stature, with fierce, eager eyes under their huge turbans—men swift in the march, forward in the fight, and eager for the pillage. On the left of the line, in massive, serried ranks, a waving sea of plumes and tartan, stood the 93rd Highlanders, 'a solid mass of brawny-limbed men.'

"The old chief, with a worn and anxious look, rode along the line, followed by his suite, and made a short speech to each corps, which was received in silence. None of these knew him yet, and therefore looked at him critically. But when he approached the 93rd, who had learned to honour and love him through the bitter days in the Crimea, such a shout of welcome burst from the brawny throats of the Highlandmen that his rugged brow instantly cleared,

and his anxious-looking features broke into a bright smile. He acknowledged the cheer by a hearty salute and then addressed his men. 'Ninety-third,' he said, 'when I took leave of you in Portsmouth [after returning from the Crimea] I never thought I should see you again. I expected the bugle, or maybe the bagpipes, to sound a call for me to go somewhere else long before you would be likely to return to our dearly-loved home. But here I am, prepared to lead you through another campaign. And I must tell you, my lads, there is work of difficulty and danger before us—harder work and greater dangers than any we encountered in the Crimea. But I trust you to overcome the difficulties and to brave the dangers.' He told them something of what they would have to do, and ended, 'So when we make an attack, you must come to close quarters as quickly as possible; keep well together and use the bayonet. Remember that the cowardly sepoys, who are eager to murder women and children, cannot look a European soldier in the face when it is accompanied with cold steel. Ninety-third! you are my own lads; I rely on you to do the work!'

"'Ay, ay, Sir Colin,' came a voice from the ranks; 'ye ken us and we ken you. We'll bring the women and children out o' Lucknow or die wi' you in the attempt!' The whole regiment burst into another resounding cheer, in which all the other corps now joined."

"The Campbells are Coming"

Having regard to the difficulties and loss of life suffered by Havelock's army in making its way through the tortuous streets of the city, it was desirable that some European from the beleaguered garrison should come out and lead Campbell's army by some safer route. Outram had already sent out, by a spy, plans and details; but these were not sufficient. Some hesitation was felt by Sir James Outram in making this requirement known among the persons forming his garrison, having regard to the fact that already several native spies had been caught and killed by the rebels. Nevertheless, the need became known, and a volunteer came forward in the form of a civilian, a clerk named Kavanagh. He was a man of great physical strength, who did not seem to possess nerves. The one great fault of his character, which, however, did not prevent him from being a very brave man, was his inordinate vanity and self-esteem. He got a native spy, named Kanoojee Lal, to promise to accompany him, and then went to Sir James Outram and offered to do the service required. The General pointed out the enormous danger of the attempt, but Kavanagh was quite content to risk this, and Outram warmed to the man's bravery and let him go.

Kavanagh started at half-past eight in the evening, Outram and Napier shaking hands with him as he went. Passing through the British lines, Kavanagh and his native companion crossed the river by a ford. The European then disguised himself, staining himself

with lampblack, and wearing a large turban to hide his red hair. Then he entered Lucknow by a bridge, and escaped notice owing probably to the bad lighting of the city streets. He and Kanoojee Lal passed out into the open country, fearing lest they should be challenged and discovered at every step. Finally they reached a large park to the east of the city, called the Dilkusha Park. Here they wandered about at a loss, until they reached a hut, and under cover of a tale they got the occupants to direct them to the high-road. At three o'clock a guard of sepoys surprised them, and Kanoojee Lal threw away a dispatch he carried, in case they should search him. However, they got away by explaining that they were going to a friend's house in a village some miles away, Kavanagh, who spoke Hindu like a native, getting the sepoys to direct him on his way. Two hours later Kavanagh felt so exhausted that he lay down and slept, being awakened in a little while by an advanced picket of Sir Colin Campbell's force, by whom he was taken to the Commander-in-Chief, to whom he told his tale. For this exploit Kavanagh was granted the Victoria Cross, besides a gift of £2000, and was made a Civil Servant. He afterward wrote a little book describing his experience, in which he compared himself to Horatius Cocles, Decius, and other ancient heroes, and hinted that his name also would "descend from age to age as if never to be obliterated from the heroic pages of history." No doubt he and his bravery

"The Campbells are Coming" will be remembered while the stirring pages of British history are read, but he need not have said so.

After learning all that Kavanagh had to tell him, Sir Colin decided that instead of going through the narrow streets, he would attack by way of the eastern outskirts of the city, whereby only six or seven posts occupied by the enemy would have to be forced. The points thus to be attacked were the Dilkusha Palace, a college called the Martinière, a mess-house, the Sikandarbagh, the Shah Najaf, and the Motee Munzil, the last three being native palaces occupied by the sepoys.

The rebels believed that Sir Colin would advance along the road by which Havelock had forced his way with such great loss, and they had therefore prepared a warm reception for him. In order to mislead the enemy, Sir Colin, two days later, on the 14th November, made a strong demonstration toward the town, while his main body went off toward the Dilkusha Park, lying to the right of the town. This operation threw the enemy off their guard, and they offered no opposition until the Dilkusha Palace was reached. Here, in the course of making a reconnaissance, Lieutenant Roberts, known to the men of the 93rd as 'Plucky Wee Bobs,' was thought to be killed by a round-shot from a rebel battery behind the palace, and when the men saw that he got on his horse again unharmed they gave him a rousing cheer. The enemy's guns were soon captured, and the rebels fled back to the

Martinière, which, however, was occupied without much fighting on the following day. On Monday, the 16th, Captain Peel's Naval Battery fired off several rockets from the Martinière as a signal to Outram at the Residency that the great attempt at forcing a passage to his relief was to be made that day. Just before the men marched, Sir Colin told them that now their heaviest work was before them, but that all they had to do was to keep in threes as soon as a position was stormed, and that while the middle man made the attack upon an enemy, the man at each side was to protect him with his bayonet. It was by keeping cool and following this advice that such terrible havoc was made among the sepoys when the next position, the Sikandarbagh, was stormed.

When they reached this place the British found that it was a two-storied building with a flat roof, standing in the middle of a large garden. As soon as the head of the column appeared, from every window of the house muskets were pointed, and a murderous fire was poured into them. Sir Colin ordered the men to lie down, saying that "Every man was worth his weight in gold to England that day." The British guns were brought up to within a hundred yards of the house and began to make a breach in a wall, the gunners meanwhile falling before the muskets of the rebels.

It was an anxious time. The rebels were picking off numbers of the men, but after an hour's work a

breach was made in the garden wall, and some Punjabees were sent to enter the breach. They advanced, shouting their battle-cry, but their English officers were shot down and this checked the Sikhs. Then Sir Colin called to Colonel Ewart, commanding the 93rd Highlanders, and said: "Ewart, bring on the tartan," and like one man the Scotsmen leapt up from the ground and rushed for the breach, with a yell of pent-up rage which struck terror into the hearts of the sepoys, who could be seen running from the wall into the house. It was a disputed point which of the many heroic men who raced to the breach was the first to get in. The Punjabees, as soon as the Highlanders were launched at the wall, took heart and ran to get before them. But the British won that race. Lance-Corporal Donnelly of the 93rd is said to have been the first to mount the deadly breach, but was instantly slain; then came Subadar Gokul Sing of the Punjabees, and Sergeant-Major Murray of the 93rd. Both these were killed at once. At the same time the principal gate was forced, and the whole place was rushed by the British troops. The defence was fierce, but it was at length overborne, and the place was in the possession of the British.

One curious incident is related by Forbes-Mitchell as showing that the sepoys also included women among their ranks. "In the centre of the inner court of the Sikandarbagh," writes the narrator, "there was a large *peepul* (Indian fig) tree, with a very bushy

top, round the foot of which were set a number of jars full of cool water. When the slaughter was almost over, many of our men went under the tree for the sake of its shade, and to quench their burning thirst with a draught of the cool water from the jars. A number, however, lay dead under this tree, both of the 53rd and 93rd, and the many bodies lying in that particular spot attracted the notice of Captain Dawson. After having carefully examined the wounds, he noticed that in every case the men had evidently been shot from above. He thereupon stepped out from beneath the tree and called to 'Quaker' Wallace to look up if he could see any one in the top of the tree, because all the dead under it had evidently been shot from above. Wallace had his rifle loaded, and stepping back he carefully scanned the top of the tree. He almost immediately called out, 'I see him, sir,' and cocking his rifle he repeated aloud,

'I'll pay my vows now to the Lord
Before his people all.'

He fired, and down fell a body dressed in a tight-fitting red jacket and tight-fitting, rose-coloured silk trousers, and the breast of the jacket bursting open with the fall showed that the wearer was a woman. She was armed with a pair of heavy, old-pattern cavalry pistols, one of which was in her belt, still loaded, and her pouch was still about half-full of ammunition, while from her perch in the tree, which

had been carefully prepared before the attack, she had killed more than half a dozen men."

Over 2000 sepoys lay dead in the building and the inner court. Well had the British soldiers remembered Cawnpore, for only a few of the rebels had escaped.

The British were drawn off and were assembled to have their muster-rolls called, when from all sides, and especially from the Shah Najaf, a mosque immediately on their line of march, a terrible fire of grape-shot was opened upon them. Sir Colin, though the day was nearly done, determined to attempt the assault of the mosque at once, and accordingly the Naval Brigade under Peel brought up its guns and opened fire. The mosque was surrounded by a strong high wall, in which a breach had to be battered before the place could be taken. The artillery suffered severely in this attack, for from loopholes in the walls, and from the top of the mosque, the rebels poured in a withering fire of musket-ball and showers of arrows, the latter of which were discharged with great force and precision. In spite of all efforts little impression seemed to be made, while many men had been shot down and an ammunition wagon had exploded, killing several soldiers.

Sir Colin sat on his white horse observing the scene. He saw how critical was the position. Night was coming on, the artillery could not subdue the fierce fire kept up by the mutineers, retreat was impossible,

and the only possible course was to go on. By this time the sun was very low, and through the dusk and the smoke of battle the flashes of guns and muskets could be clearly seen. Hundreds of the enemy swarmed on the ramparts, flourishing swords and torches, and shouting to the British to come on.

A battalion of mixed companies was ordered up to storm the breach, which was still not of a great size. The men made a determined effort to climb up, but were exposed to such a tempest of missiles, grenades and round-shot, arrows and brickbats, burning rags saturated with oil, and torrents of boiling water, that they had to retreat, leaving many dead and wounded.

Then Sir Colin summoned his Highlanders, the 93rd. He told them that after their assault on the Sikandarbagh he had not intended to call upon them again, but the building before them had to be carried that day. The men answered with a cheer, and voices called out, "Ay, ay, Sir Colin, we stood by you at Balaklava, and we will stand by you here!" The ranks were then formed, and the men were about to be led forward, when Sergeant John Paton, of their number, came running up breathless and told Brigadier Hope that he had gone round the other side of the Shah Najaf, and discovered a breach which had been made by the British round-shot in the wall opposite to the point where the main attack was being made. He had found nobody on guard there, and had been able to climb up the breach

and look right in, while the sepoys had all rushed to the other side to repulse the attack we had made.

At once a company of the 93rd were sent round to this breach, while the main body attacked the front breach. But soon those at the latter position found that the enemy who had hitherto resisted so furiously were disappearing, and in a little while the main gate in the wall was opened, and the faces of their comrades appeared at the opening. The company which had gone to the rear had only to show their faces when the whole garrison fled, and the Shah Najaf, which a few moments before seemed to menace almost a disaster to British arms, was now taken without a further blow. Only a score of the mutineers were caught before they could escape, and were bayoneted on the spot.

Sir Colin and his men spent the night in the position which they had captured, and next morning began their advance on the two remaining places held in force by the rebels. These were the mess-house and the Motee Mahal. After some hours' bombardment the first of these was carried, and the garrison retired in disorder to the Motee Mahal. After a brief but fierce struggle this position also was captured, and now but a few hundred yards separated the advanced post of the besieged from the relievers. Havelock had pushed on from his quarters near the Residency, and had taken two strong places from the enemy

so as to shorten the distance over which Sir Colin's men would have to force their way.

Though the space over which the chiefs of the besieged garrison now rode was swept with musket-fire and round-shot, Outram and Havelock and some of their staff advanced to welcome the Commander-in-Chief. As Havelock came forward to the ranks, the men cheered him lustily. His face flushed and he was deeply moved by so spontaneous a sign of their admiration. "Soldiers," he said, the glad tears in his eyes, "I am happy to see you; I am happy to think you have got into this place with a smaller loss than I had."

The losses in this campaign were 45 officers and 496 men, somewhat over a tenth of the force engaged.

The second relief of Lucknow took place on the 17th November, and during the following days the women and children and wounded were safely withdrawn, under cover of the fire from Peel's battery, which kept the mutineers at a respectful distance. When the garrison heard that they also had to evacuate the Residency, their disgust was great. Brigadier Inglis urged Campbell to allow him 600 men, with which he undertook to continue holding the Residency. Sir Colin Campbell, however, would not consent. He had heard that General Wyndham, whom he had left at Cawnpore, was threatened by a large army of mutineers under Tantia Topee, the most

skilful leader they possessed, and he knew that every man would be required for the relief of Cawnpore. The whole force therefore withdrew, and by the morning of the 24th were gathered in the Dilkusha Park, very depressed, in spite of their success, at the news that General Havelock was dying.

The veteran had indeed come to the end of his exertions. Once the strain and excitement of fighting were withdrawn, his bodily weakness made itself felt. Dysentery attacked him, and his strength could not resist its onslaught. He died peacefully on the morning of the 24th, and was buried near the Alambagh, his bier being followed by Sir Colin Campbell, Outram, and Inglis, and by some of the soldiers who had been his companions in his heroic march to Lucknow.

Leaving General Outram's division of 4000 men to hold the Alambagh, Sir Colin pushed forward with the rest of the army, guarding the women and children and wounded, and made the best of his way to Cawnpore, from which direction the sound of big guns had been coming for two days. When they had marched twenty miles on the way to Cawnpore Sir Colin Campbell called up his particular regiment, the 93rd, and told them that General Wyndham had been attacked by some of the Nana's troops, together with the Gwalior contingent; that his force had been compelled to retire within the fort which General Neill had built at the head of the bridge of boats, and that the 93rd

must reach the bridge that night in order to prevent its being captured by the enemy. In the latter event they would be cut off, with some 50,000 sepoys in their rear and a well-equipped army of 40,000 in their front. "So, 93rd," said Sir Colin, "I don't ask you to undertake this forced march in your present tired condition without good reason. You must reach Cawnpore to-night at all costs." "And as usual," says Forbes-Mitchell, who relates the episode, "when he took the men into his confidence, he was answered from the ranks, 'All right, Sir Colin, we'll do it.' To which he replied, 'Very well, 93rd, remember, I depend on you.'" Although terribly footsore and tired, not having had their clothes off for eighteen days, the men made good their promise, and reached the banks of the Ganges just as the sun was setting, having marched for thirty hours and covered forty-seven miles under the scorching sun. Early next morning the column, with its convoy of wounded and the women and children, crossed the bridge of boats and entered the entrenchments on the opposite bank, which, under the able and energetic measures of Captain Mowbray Thomson, one of the survivors from Wheeler's entrenchment, was now a place of some strength.

General Wyndham had been left in Cawnpore with orders not to move out of his walls, but to strengthen his position and to detain all detachments coming from Calcutta. When by these means

his army numbered over 2000, he thought he was strong enough to go into the open and attempt to crush the sepoys, whose separate armies were now converging upon Cawnpore. He was able to throw back a small force of sepoys, but from behind them the main body, consisting of the Gwalior contingent, 25,000 strong, and of the finest material, threatened to overwhelm him. Wyndham retired, encamped for the night outside Cawnpore, but found himself by dawn almost cut off from the city by the forces under Tantia Topee. He ordered a retreat.

Wyndham's men were mainly young soldiers, and as the sepoys followed up the retreat with a murderous artillery fire, a panic ensued. "The men got quite out of hand," says an eye-witness, "and fled pell-mell for the fort. An old Sikh *sirdâr* (chieftain) at the gate tried to stop them, and to form them up in some order, and when they pushed him aside and rushed past him, he lifted up his hands and said, 'You are not the brothers of the men who beat the Khâlsa army and conquered the Punjab!' The old Sikh followed the flying men through the Fort Gate, and patting some of them on the back said, 'Don't run, don't be afraid, there is nothing to hurt you!'" But in vain did this native soldier endeavour to hearten the white men: they still ran on into safety and were not ashamed.

Sir Colin's first care was to see to the dispatch to Allahabad, under a strong guard, of the helpless ones

under his charge. The rebels under Tantia Topee held nearly all Cawnpore, but Sir Colin did not attempt to dislodge them while he was hampered by the convoy. As soon as this was safely on the way to the south, however, Sir Colin made all dispositions and resolved to crush the forces of the mutineers.

On the morning of the 6th December, when all was ready, Campbell delivered his attack. The rebels were strongly placed. They held a position which included the narrow streets and lanes of the city. Here was placed the centre of their army, the left of which was protected by the Ganges, while their right stretched far beyond the city on a wide plain extending toward Calpee. Here, behind a canal running west and east, was situated the camp of the Gwalior contingent, the most formidable fighters among the rebels. Sir Colin Campbell saw that if he could crush the right wing of the enemy, then swing round his own left and block the northern road of escape to Bithoor, the defeat would be final and overwhelming, by reason of the enormous numbers of the enemy that would be compelled to surrender.

The battle opened with a fierce attack by batteries under Wyndham upon the rebel forces camped on the Ganges and holding the streets of Cawnpore. The rain of shot crashed into the crowds of rebels, killing them by scores. Believing this was the real attack, the sepoys brought up other forces to resist the infantry attack to which they guessed the tempest



Peel and his Sailors at Cawnpore
W. H. Overend

of artillery was but a preliminary. Meanwhile the main body of infantry, masked by the incessant cannonade, was launched at the canal in front of the Gwalior contingent. There was a brief struggle for a bridge which spanned the canal, but the dash and verve with which Peel's sailors rushed up their guns stirred the infantry so greatly that they stormed across the bridge and launched themselves with overwhelming fury on the camp of the Gwalior men.

Here they met with hardly any opposition, for so completely was the enemy taken by surprise that, without striking a blow, the flower of the rebel army, unable to stem the fury of attack, took to their heels and streamed away, pursued by the cavalry and horse artillery. For hours the British kept the enemy on the run, and, forsaking guns, baggage, carts, and ammunition, they at last threw away their arms and fled to hiding.

Meanwhile the enemy's centre and left, learning of the disaster which had befallen the 'invincible' Gwalior contingent, became disorganized, and began to stream northward from the city, pursued by some of the British. Had Sir Colin's instructions been strictly followed by Mansfield, one of his generals, and a point on the Bithoor road seized, something like two-thirds of the enemy's army would have been forced to surrender. But General Mansfield bungled and faltered, and allowed great masses of the enemy to escape. On sending Sir Hope Grant next day to

follow up the fugitives, severe punishment was inflicted upon them, and they were finally scattered, fifteen of their guns being captured.

The overwhelming defeat thus inflicted upon the rebels did much to revive the prestige of the British in Oudh and the neighbouring districts, but it was seen that only by attacking the rebels at Lucknow, and seizing that city once for all, would the mutiny be wholly crushed in this part of India. Sir Colin Campbell now, therefore, bent all his energies toward this aim, and began to collect ammunition and siege-guns with a view to a speedy advance upon Lucknow.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE FIGHT FOR LUCKNOW

SIR JAMES OUTRAM, left with his force to hold the Alambagh, had fulfilled the task given to him with the greatest success. He had been stationed there, immediately in front of the rebellious city, as a perpetual menace, which told the sepoys plainly enough that though Sir Colin and his army had been compelled to leave Lucknow in the hands of the rebels, it was only for a time. Before long the British forces would return and crush them. Meanwhile, against all the attacks which were launched against Sir James Outram he more than held his own. He had enormously strengthened the position by throwing up earthworks, but, as against this, his little force was outnumbered by the enemy in the proportion of nearly thirty to one. Nevertheless, the men he commanded were almost all now well-seasoned veterans. Rather more than three-fourths were British, but the native soldiers were of splendid fighting material, among them being the Sikhs, led by Brasyer.

Time after time Outram hurled back the rebels from his walls, and his cavalry under Barrow and Wale scattered them, while his guns, commanded by Maude

and Vincent Eyre, did great execution among them. One great service which he did was to hold at Lucknow an enormous number of sepoys who, if he had not been where he was, would have gone south to join the Gwalior contingent, and would thereby have made the task of Sir Colin Campbell at Cawnpore so much the harder. After the defeat inflicted upon the rebels in the latter quarter, on the 6th December, the garrison at Lucknow made repeated attempts to beat Outram out of his camp, but in vain. Six times they launched their hordes against him, but on every occasion they surged in vain against the rock-like ranks of the British. In the last four engagements they were led by the Moulvie of Fyzabad, one of their most intelligent and sagacious leaders, but with no better success. Having thus pent up forces, which, if allowed to go free, would have carried rebellion and disorder into wider districts still, Sir James Outram, at the end of February 1858, received word from Sir Colin Campbell that the main British army was now advancing to the final assault upon Lucknow.

Meanwhile, however, the rebels had not been idle, and under the direction of the Moulvie, they had thrown up great earthworks which, in their ignorance of military defences, they deemed to be impregnable. As both Havelock and Sir Colin Campbell had attacked the city from the south, the insurgents could not believe that any other defences were necessary than those which would obstruct

attacks from the same direction. They had therefore thrown up three lines of earthworks as big as railway embankments, one behind a canal running from the river to the Charbagh Bridge, a second enclosing some portion of the narrow lanes and streets of the city, and the third defending a palace called the Kaisarbagh, which the rebels considered to be their citadel.

Sir Colin Campbell learned of these preparations from his spies, and the ease with which these stupendous bastioned walls could be rendered useless was immediately apparent. In consultation with his chief engineer, Brigadier Robert Napier, he decided upon his plan of operations. Outram was to cross the river just below the city, with artillery, and having marched along the bank until he reached the ground opposite the town, he was to pour an incessant fire into the rear of the enemy's defences. The sepoys had left their northern side wholly unprotected, and an attack from that side could not fail to have the greatest effect upon them. Sir Colin Campbell was to assault the right flank of the enemy, endeavour to break through the defences of the sepoys along the main street of Lucknow, called the Huzrut Gunge, and obtain possession of the Kaisarbagh at its eastern extremity.

On a lovely morning, the 3rd March, Sir Colin Campbell advanced toward the city. When the ranks reached the slightly rising ground of Dilkusha Park

and gazed at the city, many a mind was struck with the beauty of the scene. In the words of the *Times* war correspondent, who was with the army, it was "a vision of palaces, minarets, domes azure and golden, cupolas, colonnades, long façades of fair perspective, in pillar and column—all rising up amid a calm, still ocean of the brightest verdure. Look for miles and miles away, and still the ocean spreads, and the towers of the fairy city gleam in its midst. Spires of gold glitter in the sun. Turrets and gilded spheres shine like constellations. There is nothing mean or squalid to be seen. Here is a city more vast than Paris, as it seems, and more brilliant, lying before us."

But for all the beauty of the scene, the signs of war were ever present. There was the freshly turned earth of the vast entrenchments in front of the enemy's position, and on the ground beside the road in which the British army marched, and behind bushes, gleamed the white bones of sepoys, bits of blue or red uniform still sticking to them, showing where the red tide of war had swept in the fights around the Alambagh. Even as the soldiers looked on the fair and peaceful scene, the roar of guns shook the ground, and shot dashed amid their ranks, from the batteries of the enemy on the opposite bank of the canal. Soon came the answering volleys from the Naval Brigade, and the storm of war once again raged to and fro.

The army under the command of Sir Colin Campbell,

though much less than the enemy in point of numbers, was yet the largest that had marched under the British flag during the Mutiny. It comprised seventeen battalions of infantry, twenty-eight squadrons of cavalry, and 134 guns and mortars. Altogether it numbered 31,000 men, 9000 of whom were Gurkhas. Sir Colin had had to wait for the latter, under the command of Jung Bahadur. The British General had chafed at the delay, and at one time had thought of proceeding without them. But from this step, which would have been most ill-advised, he was dissuaded by Lord Canning. He was sure, said the latter, that Jung Bahadur would be driven wild to find himself left out in the cold, and if the army did not wait for him it was feared that he might take offence at not being allowed to partake of the glory of the siege and return to Nepaul. It was indeed a fact of the greatest moment in the eyes of all the natives, that the prince of one of the most warlike peoples of India should be fighting on the side of the British.

By the morning of the 6th March two pontoon bridges had been thrown across the Goomtee, and Sir James Outram's division crossed the river. It was a fine sight, in the flashing sunlight, as rank upon rank, the Hussars in blue and yellow, the Lancers in red and blue, and the Bays in white helmets and vivid scarlet, crossed the bridge and deployed upon the other side. The gathering enemy suddenly rushed

from the shelter of some trees along a road, and instantly the Queen's Bays were after them, scattering them like sheep. So impetuous were the British that several galloped right into the enemy's lines and were cut to pieces. Spies brought word later that the head of one of the officers, a Major Percy Smith, was cut off, and with his helmet, plume, and uniform, was stuck on a lance and paraded up and down the streets of Lucknow as being the head of Sir Colin Campbell.

Next day Outram advanced his ranks toward the position occupied by the enemy on the opposite side of the river, and opened his batteries upon them. At the same time he sent a force to attack their left flank, and the enemy were driven from their position, thus enabling Outram to occupy a point of vantage from which to begin his artillery attack upon the city. Having placed his batteries, Outram poured a continuous rain of shot and shell in rear of the enemy's great earthworks, thus making these tremendous fortifications absolutely useless. Nevertheless, the rebels answered the fire of his batteries for some time, until the better marksmanship of the British and the heavier weight of their metal silenced the sepoys' fire.

On the 9th, having waited until Outram had begun his heavy attack on the enemy, Campbell sent a force of infantry to assault the Martinière, the building which protected the front of the first

earthwork. The 42nd was sent forward to lead the attack, and the Highlanders were supposed to support them. But the latter were too keen to wait upon their comrades, and no sooner had both regiments issued from the shelter of the walls of the Dilkusha, than they raced down the slopes neck and neck like a mountain torrent. The rebels, confused by the unexpected attack in their rear delivered by Outram's artillery, had not courage to resist the frontal attack. The British, racing together, cleared earthworks, trenches, and rifle-pits almost in one leap, the sepoys flying before them like hares, and swimming across the canal to save themselves from complete destruction. The first line of the enemy's defence was now within reach of the British.

The line was finally gained under peculiar circumstances. Sir James Outram had poured a hot flank fire into the battery of the sepoys which commanded the river, and so severely had the rebels suffered that eventually they forsook their guns. After a time this fact became evident to some of Outram's men. Lieutenant Butler and four privates ran down to the water's edge, and by shouting and waving tried to attract the attention of some Highlanders who were stationed a little distance away down the opposite bank of the river. But their efforts were in vain. Without a moment's hesitation Butler took off his coat and plunged into the stream, swimming toward

the apparently forsaken battery. It was a plucky thing to do, for no one knew whether there were not many sepoys lurking in the vicinity. Nothing daunted, however, Butler sprang ashore, climbed up the parapet of the battery, and, standing on top of it, draggled and wet, began waving frantically to the Highlanders to come and take possession. Some sepoys near-by opened fire upon him, but he still shouted and gesticulated, until after a little delay his signals were perceived, and the Highlanders and Sikhs came on with a run and occupied the position. Then Butler took to the river again and rejoined his regiment under Outram. For his plucky action the officer was deservedly awarded the Victoria Cross.

Next day Sir Colin stormed and captured a house within the first line of the enemy's defences known as Banks's House, while Outram pushed further along the other bank of the river and began to throw shot and shell into the Kaisarbagh, the citadel of the rebels. From Banks's House a heavy fire was kept up against a strong position near-by known as the Begum Kothee, or Palace, a collection of buildings which the sepoys held in force and which they had strengthened in various ways. For hours the round-shot pounded the enclosing wall of the palace grounds, and by half-past three a small breach was made. Thereupon word was sent to the 93rd to fall in. The men swiftly formed ranks, tightening their belts, pressing their bonnets firmly on their

heads, loosening the ammunition in their pouches, and seeing that the springs of their bayonets held tight. When the signal was given the Highlanders leaped forward, supported by the 4th Punjab Rifles, and raced to the scratch in the wall through which they would have to pass in their attempt to seize the warren of courts, corridors, and chambers known as the Begum's palace, which was held by some 5000 sepoys.

Rushing to the breach, the Highlanders found the rebels in strong force, but after a few moments' stubborn fighting the British dashed through, bayoneting all who withstood them. Twenty yards inside the wall the soldiers were stopped by a ditch, some 18 feet wide and over 12 feet deep. Without hesitation the Highlanders slid down into it and then ran along the bottom looking for some place where they could mount up the other side. Soon they met some Grenadiers who had also entered through the breach. The lieutenant at the head of these, a young and daring fellow named Wood, got on the shoulders of one of his privates and scrambled up to the top, sword in hand.

As soon as the enemy saw him climb out of the ditch, they ran inside the palace, slamming doors and barricading windows. The lieutenant, seeing the sepoys run, lay down on the brink of the ditch and, reaching down, caught hold of the men's rifles by the muzzle below the bayonets, and the men down below

pushing their fellows up, all were very soon hauled up out of the ditch. Then the danger they had run from such a proceeding occurred to one of the men, who turned to Lieutenant Wood, and said:

"If any officer in the regiment deserves to get the Victoria Cross, you do, sir; for besides the risk you have run from the bullets of the enemy, it's more than a miracle that you're not shot by our own rifles; they're all on full cock!"

The lieutenant had pulled up the men by the muzzles of their rifles, any of which might easily have gone off in the scramble up the side of the ditch.

Together the Highlanders and Grenadiers rushed at the closed doors and windows and began smashing them in, shots meanwhile pouring out from the sepoys within. Barrier after barrier was quickly beaten in; the sepoys fought stubbornly in places, but in others they fled helter-skelter. Room after room was invaded, no thought of unequal numbers holding the British back. The Punjabees were now with them, and together they fought the sepoys in fierce hand-to-hand conflicts. The word was, "Keep well together, men, and use the bayonet; give them the Sikandarbagh and the 16th of November over again," and gallantly the soldiers fought, crying fiercely, "Remember Cawnpore!" as the bayonets sank home.

The tussle was fiercest in the inner court, where sepoys were crowded to the number of about 1000.

No quarter was asked or given; it was sheer grim fighting to the death. When that portion of the struggle was over, over 860 rebels lay dead on the ground. The same kind of fighting had raged from room to room and from court to court, and wherever the Highlander went he was invigorated and encouraged by the skirling note of the bagpipes, for through all the time of the assault John M'Leod, the pipe-major, was playing the pipes, walking up and down a courtyard with fights going on around him, and dead bodies lying here and there, as calmly as if he were walking round the officers' mess tent at a military show. When, later, General Lugard complimented him on his coolness, he replied: "Ah, sir, I knew our boys would fight all the better if I cheered 'em with the bagpipes."

When the great fight in the inner court was over, there were still a good many sepoys hiding in rooms, who had to be cleared out, and the process of doing this was a risky one. Homeric combats took place in this phase of the fighting. Lieutenant and Adjutant MacBean, who had joined the 93rd when a ploughman, and who rose from the ranks to command the regiment, went to a room in which were a *havildar* (sergeant), another native officer, and nine sepoys. MacBean took them all on, and had killed ten by the time his men came up. They were for helping him, but he shouted to them to stop where they were, and he and the *havildar* went at it with their swords.

MacBean made a feint cut, and then swiftly gave the point of his sword, and thrust it through the native.

It was during an attack on a room filled with sepoys that Major Hodson met his death, owing entirely to his own recklessness. The incident is related by Forbes-Mitchell, who stood beside Hodson at the time. He relates that he and some of his fellows joined a Lieutenant Sergison, and "while breaking in the door of a room, Mr Sergison was shot dead at my side with several men. When we had partly broken in the door, I saw that there were a large number of men in the room, well armed with swords and spears, in addition to firearms of all sorts, and, not wishing to be either killed myself or have more of the men who were with me killed, I divided my party, placing some at each side of the door to shoot every man who showed himself, or attempted to rush out. I then sent two men back to the breach, where I knew Napier with his engineers were to be found, to get a few bags of gunpowder with slow matches fixed, to light and pitch into the room. Instead of finding Napier, the two men sent by me found the redoubtable Major Hodson, who had accompanied Napier as a volunteer in the storming of the palace. Hodson did not wait for the powder bags, but, after showing the men where to go for them, came running up himself, sabre in hand. 'Where are the rebels?' he said. I pointed to the door of the room, and Hodson, shouting 'Come on!' was

about to rush in. I implored him not to do so, saying, 'It's certain death, wait for the powder; I've sent men for powder bags.' Hodson made a step forward, and I put out my hand to seize him by the shoulder, to pull him out of the line of the doorway, when he fell back, shot through the chest. He gasped out a few words, either, 'Oh, my wife!' or, 'Oh, my mother!'—I cannot now rightly remember—but was immediately choked by blood."

Forbes-Mitchell lifted Hodson into a native carriage, and he was carried to the doctor's, but lived only till the following day. The two men who had been sent for the powder bags came up immediately afterward, and the matches having been ignited the bags were thrown into the room. As the sepoys rushed out a young soldier named Rule dashed among them, using both bayonet and rifle-butt, shouting, "Revenge for the death of Hodson!" He killed more than half the men single-handed, and the others were quickly disposed of.

On the same day which saw the capture of the Begum Kothee, the Sikandarbagh and the Shah Najaf were again taken, and the lines of the British were thus closing in narrowly about the doomed city. The next two days, the 12th and 13th March, were spent by Outram in scourging the interior of the second line of earthworks with his mortars and round-shot, and with directing a heavy fire upon the enemy's citadel, the Kaisarbagh. At the same time, Napier and his

engineers were breaking or sapping through the houses on the left side of the principal street of Lucknow, the Huzrut Gunge, for the purpose of dragging heavy guns into position to attack the Kaisarbagh.

Before this could be assaulted, however, the Emambarra, a stronghold near the principal street, had to be stormed. A fierce fire was poured upon it both by Outram and Sir Colin Campbell. The din throughout the hours of daylight was terrific; shot and shell from beyond the river fell into the doomed building, and was answered by the crash and boom of guns, the shot from which were directed on the walls of the massive structure. In spite of the fire from the housetops, windows, and loopholes, the batteries on the Lucknow side were brought up to within 30 yards of the building, and each huge shot as it smashed into the wall brought down great fragments in clouds of dust.

At length the word was given: "To the breach!" and the men of the 10th Foot, together with Brasyer's Sikhs, were launched at the building. The fury of attack was too much for the sepoys; they fled, pursued by the eager soldiers, who bayoneted or shot all who tarried or attempted to make a stand. When the great building was cleared many of the British and Sikhs were exhausted, for overhead the sun poured down its fiercest rays. "Water, water!" was the cry. But while some looked for water, others had followed the flying sepoys, and with shouts of

exultation found themselves emerging through the great gateway into the main street of Lucknow, having by this success got within the second line of the enemy's defences.

At the same time young Havelock, with some men of the 90th, was pushing forward through the streets in a line parallel with the direction taken by Brasyer's Sikhs, and rushed a small palace which commanded a portion of the Kaisarbagh. Seeing the successes which had been gained, the engineers now suggested that no more should be attempted that day. But the blood of both British and Sikhs was up. They saw that the fire kept up by young Havelock upon the Kaisarbagh had been too hot for some of the enemy's gunners, and that three of their bastions were deserted. The Sikhs and the men of the 90th were mad to go on; and Brasyer and Havelock, having the same flame of victory in their blood, led them forward. They clambered up an undefended embrasure of the citadel, and found themselves in a courtyard. Havelock rushed back to the Emambarra for the men of the 10th, who eagerly advanced with him. Brasyer and Havelock, with some of the Sikhs and the men of the 10th, pushed forward to the Fara Kothee and the mess-house, which they also rushed, so broken by now was the spirit of the rebels.

The third line of entrenchments was now in British hands, and both the men of the left and right attacking forces were in touch with each other. This being so,

General Franks and Brigadier Robert Napier decided to attempt to make an end at once, and bringing up reinforcements they attacked the Kaisarbagh and stormed that strong place, the whole maze of courtyards, buildings, and palaces falling into the hands of the soldiers as they rushed eagerly forward, the enemy in his thousands scattering and fleeing in a panic.

Then ensued a scene almost unexampled in the annals of the British army. The unexpected suddenness and completeness of their triumph seem to have maddened the British soldiery. "Here and there," wrote Dr Russell, the *Times* war correspondent, "the invaders have forced their way into the long corridors, and you hear the musketry rattling inside, the crash of glass, the shouts and yells of the combatants, while little jets of smoke curl out of the closed lattices. Lying amid the orange groves are dead and dying sepoys; and the white statues are reddened with blood. Leaning against a smiling Venus is a British soldier, shot through the neck, gasping, and at every gasp bleeding to death. Here and there officers are running to and fro after their men, persuading or threatening in vain. From the broken portals issue soldiers laden with loot or plunder,—shawls, rich tapestry, gold and silver brocade, caskets of jewels, arms, splendid dresses. The men are wild with fury and lust of gold—literally drunk with plunder. Some come out with china vases or mirrors, dash them to pieces on the ground, and return to seek more valuable



The Plunder of the Kaisarbagh
William Simpson, R.I.
From the Indian Section, Victoria and Albert Museum

booty. Others are busy gouging out the precious stones from the stems of pipes, from saddle-cloths, or the hilts of swords, or butts of pistols or firearms. Some swathe their bodies in stuffs crusted with precious metals and gems; others carry off useless lumber, brass pots, pictures, or vases of jade, and china. In court after court the scene is still the same. These courts open one to another by lofty gateways, ornamented with the double-fish of the royal family of Oudh, or by arched passages in which lie dead sepoys, their clothes smouldering on their flesh. The scene of plunder was indescribable. The soldiers had broken up several of the store-rooms, and pitched the contents into the court, which was lumbered with cases, with embroidered cloths, gold and silver brocade, silver vessels, musical instruments, arms, banners, drums, shawls, scarfs, mirrors, etc., etc., and a heap of things, the enumeration of which would make this sheet of paper like a catalogue of a broker's sale. Through these moved the men, wild with excitement, 'drunk with plunder.' I had often heard the phrase, but never saw the thing itself before."

The successes of the day were in some measure stained by these wanton scenes of plunder and destruction, but the achievements were unmistakably great. They were far in advance of anything which Sir Colin Campbell had anticipated. He, indeed, was somewhat disgusted at first at the incautious haste with which the Kaisarbagh had been carried. He

even sent orders to General Franks to evacuate the place, but that officer bluntly refused to do so.

The want of daring thus indicated in the mind of Campbell was responsible for an error which robbed the great victory which had been gained of half the influence which it would otherwise have yielded to the British cause.

At the same time as Brasyer's Sikhs were carrying the Emambarra by storm, Outram had advanced on the other side of the river as far as an iron bridge leading into the town. The sepoys held this position, but if Outram could force them back from it, the effect would have been to have bottled them up between his own troops and the main army in and around Lucknow. The result would have been that, although the loss of British lives might have been great, the mutineers would either have been utterly destroyed or would have been forced to lay down their arms. Sir James Outram saw that by such an action the mutiny throughout the whole of Oudh might be stamped out at one blow. He accordingly sent to Campbell for permission to attack the sepoys and cut off their retreat. The Commander-in-Chief replied that Outram could cross the bridge, but not if the operation would result in the loss of a single man. The instructions were, of course, absurd; no one could guarantee that no soldier would lose his life in such an attempt. If a Nicholson, or a Havelock, or a Hodson, had been in Outram's place, the attempt

would have been made first and permission requested afterward; but Outram had a strictly military mind, and would not do anything without orders, nor would he act further than his orders allowed. As a result he saw with chagrin the sepoys, horse and foot, streaming in thousands from the city across the bridge, and could not aim a blow at them.

Next day Sir Colin Campbell realized that he had made a bad blunder in permitting the rebels to escape, to spread mutiny and rebellion in wider districts. To remedy that blunder he proceeded to make another! He sent a large body of cavalry in pursuit of the fugitives. The withdrawal of the cavalry left the road open to the north, and through this gap sepoys to the number of 20,000 got clear away. By these two blunders Sir Colin Campbell enabled the rebels to keep up the struggle, though in desultory fashion, for several months longer, causing thereby needless loss of thousands of British lives.

Within the next few days the smaller posts still in possession of the rebels in and around Lucknow were stormed and taken, and by the 18th March the city was completely in possession of the British.

The appearance of the city on the morning of the 18th has been described by Forbes-Mitchell. His regiment had been resting outside the city, and were now ordered to take up a position near the Emambarra and the Kaisarbagh. The sights that met their gaze, he said, defied description. The city was in the hands

of plunderers; Europeans and Sikhs, Gurkhas and camp-followers, aided by the scum of the populace (for most of the respectable citizens had fled), were looting and robbing the houses in all directions. Corpses lay here and there in the streets, or floated down the river; minarets and domes, beautiful house fronts and windows were smashed and riddled with shot; pariah dogs were the only inhabitants of the streets, save for the bands of plunderers darting from house to house, many of them mad with excitement, loaded with loot, and followed like jackals by crowds of camp-followers; and all through the city a scene of desolation and loneliness presented itself to the eye.

In a little while, however, order was restored in some degree; prize agents were appointed, and soldiers were placed on guard in the streets to intercept plunderers on their return to camp, to force them to disgorge their loot. The amount of plunder thus accumulated by the prize agents within a week after the taking of the city was estimated at a million and a quarter sterling. What happened to it all history does not appear to know; but in some explanation it is gravely stated that each soldier who served through the relief and capture of Lucknow received as prize money the sum of about thirty shillings!

CHAPTER XXIV

THE END OF THE MUTINY

WITH the fall of Lucknow the back of the Mutiny was broken. Though fighting was continued until the end of the year 1858, the untiring energy of the British commanders in the field in following up and scattering every army of the rebels prevented the latter from making any great stand again. In the far-flung areas where mutiny still smouldered, from the foothills of the Himalayas at Rohilcund to the level plains of Central India, the campaign of repression and punishment never ceased until the last broken remnant of mutineers had skulked away to their villages and their leaders had been hanged.

By the end of May Sir Colin Campbell had reconquered Rohilcund, though the keen brain that had infused spirit into the whole mutiny, and which had obstinately struggled for supremacy in this northern district, had escaped him. This was the Moulvie of Fyzabad. He had proclaimed himself King of Hindustan, and it must be admitted that on the score of intellect he was more suited for this post than any of the other native leaders and generals whom the Mutiny had thrown up to the surface.

The Government recognized his talents and the desirability of capturing him by proclaiming a reward of 50,000 rupees for his arrest. Chased from his last stand at Fatehgarh by the victorious British, he rode post-haste on an elephant to Powain. Arrived there, he found the gate shut, but the loyal Rajah, with his brother and some followers, were standing on the rampart near-by. The Moulvie demanded the surrender of some native officials of the British whom the Rajah was protecting, and upon whom the Moulvie wished to have vengeance for some offence against himself. The Rajah refused either to give up the men or to open the gate, whereupon the Moulvie ordered his *mahout* to make the elephant break down the gate. The animal's head thundered against the wooden structure, which in a few moments began to splinter and totter.

Suddenly a volley rang out from the matchlocks of the Rajah's followers, and next moment the Moulvie was a corpse. The Rajah and his brother ran down from the walls, cut off the head of the Moulvie, and wrapped it in a cloth. Without an instant's delay the Rajah mounted his elephant and betook himself to the English magistrate at Shahjehanpore. On giving his name he was taken into the dining-room, where the magistrate and some friends were seated. Without a word the Rajah shook out the cloth, and the head of the Moulvie rolled upon the floor. Next day the magistrate had the head stuck upon a spear,

which was then placed upon the top of the police station. The natives as they went by recognized the bleeding head, and knew that now indeed the British were masters again. And the news flew from bazaar to bazaar through the length and breadth of the broad lands watered by the Five Rivers and the Ganges.

On the 16th December Sir Hugh Rose took the field against the rebels of Central India. He was a dandy who concealed beneath a fashionable exterior the spirit and resolution of a man of action. His progress through the district was marked by swift advances and hard hitting. His main objective was Jhansi, where, as has been described in an early chapter, the Ranee had committed a treacherous massacre of European men, women, and children, only exceeded in horror and enormity by the wholesale murders at Cawnpore. Week followed week, and Rose kept up his repeated blows against the bodies of mutineers who opposed his advance. Fort after fort was seized and demolished, and such terror was inspired in the minds and hearts of many of the little rajahs who thought to do battle with the English, that the last line of strong forts which lay between Sir Hugh Rose and his objective was forsaken without a blow.

The morning of the 20th March found Sir Hugh Rose within fourteen miles of Jhansi. He had sent forward a small force to reconnoitre the town, when

a dispatch from Sir Colin Campbell was placed in his hands. It directed him to march immediately to the relief of the loyal Rajah of Chirkaree, who was besieged by Tantia Topee and the remnant of the Gwalior contingent which had been defeated at Cawnpore. Accompanying Rose was Sir Robert Hamilton, who was acting as political officer, or, in other words, as representative of the civil powers, in the district now being subdued by Sir Hugh Rose. The two officers recognized that a great error of judgment had been committed by Sir Colin Campbell in thus ordering Rose to retire from Jhansi on the very eve of attacking it. The Ranee and her people, seeing the British withdraw, would believe it was in fear of their strong fortifications, and their elation would be very great, while the growing prestige of the British power would be much lowered. Left to his own judgment, however, Sir Hugh Rose could have no alternative; his only course was to obey his superior officer. But Sir Robert Hamilton, perceiving the political necessities of the case, took upon himself to direct Rose to continue his march against Jhansi.

In the strong fortress of Jhansi a council of war was being held by the Ranee and her officials, at the same time as the British officers were discussing what to do. The sepoys who had rallied to the Ranee were vehement in their advice that she should fight the advancing British. Some of her own counsellors,

however, cautiously advised her to make terms, saying that the English were now invincible, that no sepoys had stood for long against them, and that they at Jhansi in their turn would be overwhelmed by the fierce sahibs. Still others urged that it would be cowardly and shameful not to strike a blow for the kingdom which the Ranee had now got into her hands, after having been dispossessed by those 'British pigs.' The Ranee, who was of a fighting disposition, decided to follow the last counsels.

In the meantime she had taken all possible steps to strengthen the position which she held, and in this she had had the assistance of Tantia Topee, a remarkable man who, originally a weaver, had become an artilleryman in the Bengal Army. His name indicates his two trades, since it means the 'weaver-artilleryman.' On the breaking out of mutiny he had joined the service of Nana Sahib, and his gifts of leadership had recommended him to his infamous master. Tantia Topee could plan attacks and organize armies, but he was too deficient in personal courage to lead them, and he was known to be a coward.

Under his advice, however, the Ranee had repaired the strong walls about the city, had cleared out ditches and erected outworks, besides mounting all the guns she could procure. Even when, at seven o'clock on the morning of the 21st March, the British soldiers piled arms before the stronghold, the Ranee's

subjects were still wielding pickaxe and shovel in the work of throwing up further defences. With a view to destroying all cover for the attacking enemy, the Ranee had caused all the trees near the town to be destroyed, and the British soldiers had to camp on the bare plain without shelter.

On arriving before the town, Sir Hugh Rose rode off with his staff to spy out the land. Immediately before the camp of the British lay the charred and ruined remains of the cantonments, which had been destroyed when mutiny broke out. On a high rock towering above the city rose the white walls of the fort, on the topmost turret of which floated the silken standard of the Ranee. Round about the city itself were lovely gardens, lakes, temples, and mosques, making up a beautiful fringe to the native houses; north and east of the town were tree-clad hills over which ran the road to the north, to Calpee and to Cawnpore, but elsewhere there stretched a treeless and arid plain, scorched by the sun, on which the eye rested with pain.

Sir Hugh in his ride that day found that the task before him was by no means an easy one. The fort itself was of an admirable strength: its walls were of great thickness, strengthened by outworks, and its bastions bristled with cannon. On three sides the fort was protected by the city, while the western face hung over a steep rock. The city itself was girded by a wall of granite about

24 feet high, and terminated at one end in a mound on which was built a strong circular bastion. In order to gain a position from which to breach the fort, Sir Hugh saw that it would be necessary to capture the mound, on which he could raise his batteries.

His resolution was taken, and, next day, having been reinforced by some cavalry, he practically surrounded the city and fort with his squadron of horse. It was a daring thing to attempt, for his whole force was far below the number of the garrison, which amounted to some 10,000 warriors, besides 1500 sepoys. But Sir Hugh had determined that the garrison should not escape him, if it were possible to prevent them from doing so. At the same time the British General knew from his spies that Tantia Topee, who had left the town just as the white men had reached its vicinity, might try to bring a relieving force from Calpee, made up of the remnant of the once famous Gwalior contingent. Rose, therefore, set up a telegraph post on the hills east of the city, the men of which were to signal to him if they saw any force coming along the Calpee road.

He then proceeded to build a battery on rising ground about 300 yards east of the town, and on the morning of the 25th March his guns opened fire. In a few hours a part of the town was on fire, from the shells which he threw into the houses; and on the arrival of more reinforcements he built

another battery, with which he battered the mound, the fort, and the granite walls of the city.

The enemy, however, was far from idle. They got the range of the British batteries, and served their own guns with quickness and accuracy, while their marksmen from bastion and wall kept up a steady fire with their muskets. But the British infantry, burning with a lust of revenge, and eager to come to grips with the perpetrators of a crime against defenceless women and children, fought with a bitterness that took no notice either of the hot and scorching winds which swept upon them from the sandy plain, or the glare of sunlight from the rocky crags on which the town was built. The riflemen kept up a galling fire upon every one of the enemy who showed his body at the wall, and the gunners aimed their shot and shell with terrible and grim earnestness, so that each should add its hammer-blow of vengeance upon the nest of murderers and traitors. The heat was intolerable; the besiegers, never resting, did not take off their clothes at night, but snatched what sleep they could, yearning for daylight, when they could again work their guns and fire their rifles. Under the burning Indian sun they were almost stifled, but by drinking water at frequent intervals, and wrapping wet towels over their heads, they were able to ignore the attacks of the sun, whose terrible rays seemed to beat down upon them as if in aid of the rebels. All the sufferings of

the besiegers were borne patiently: were they not encouraged by the cheery, brave voice of their General, who shared their hardships at all times, and would not their bayonets very soon be at the throats and breasts of those miscreants on the walls there?

The garrison of Jhansi knew well what was in store for them; they well remembered their deeds of the preceding June, and how terribly these sahibs had exacted vengeance from other towns whose people had slain white women and children. Therefore the men of Jhansi fought with desperate resolution, knowing that only swift death would be their fortune if they fell into the hands of the British, and that the capture of their fortress would end all possibility of further rebellion in Central India. So determined were they to resist to the last that even their women worked in the batteries, bringing up ammunition to the gunners.

In spite of their frantic efforts, however, they could not beat down the fire of the British guns, the shot from which broke down the walls of the bastion on the mound and silenced the guns placed there. On the 30th March the repeated battering of the city walls at length resulted in a portion of them falling in ruins. The hole was quickly barricaded by the garrison, but red-hot shot soon destroyed most of the wood which formed the defensive work.

On the evening of the 31st, while Sir Hugh Rose was directing the fire of a battery, an aide-de-camp

hurried up with the news that the telegraph post had signalled the following words: "Here come the enemy in great force from the north." Without any sign of anxiety, Sir Hugh Rose quietly rode off to his quarters and began to make arrangements for receiving this fresh enemy, which came in overwhelming numbers. The situation of the British was sufficiently hazardous to daunt the bravest man. Before him was a resolute enemy numbering 11,000, inspired by a woman of fierce determination and of some genius; behind him was an army of some 20,000 mutineers, commanded by the best general on their side. But Sir Hugh Rose had already made up his mind how to beat both forces.

Tantia Topee brought his army down from the hills and halted it on the right flank of the British. After sunset the men of the 1st brigade were sent by Sir Hugh Rose to take up, unseen, a position on the flank of the rebel reinforcements, while the second brigade still remained in camp. During the night the sentries of Tantia Topee taunted those of the British, saying they would all be dead men next day; while the besieged shouted with glee, fired salutes, and beat drums. When day broke, the enemy advanced, and though the British fought valiantly, superior numbers forced them to retire. The artillery fired into the rebel ranks, but still they advanced. It was a critical moment; but Sir Hugh Rose was prepared. The enemy pressed on, hoping to overwhelm

the little army before it, and then to throw themselves upon the artillery and infantry, who were still bombarding the walls of the town as if nothing else was happening.

Quickly, therefore, Sir Hugh issued his orders, and the cavalry, giving their horses the spur, dashed in on the enemy's right flank. Rose, placing himself at the head of another squadron, went against the left flank. The two sides of the enemy's first line were driven back in confusion; the centre, surprised and bewildered, huddled together. A word was given, and the British infantry, rising from the ground, poured a volley into the ranks of the sepoys, who yielded and scattered, throwing Tantia's second line into confusion. Swiftly, then, the first brigade was brought up and launched against the right flank of the enemy. The effect was overwhelming. Tantia's second line was rolled up, and sounding a retreat the rebel leader fled, pursued by the cavalry, who, after following them for some miles, returned with every gun which Tantia Topee had brought into the field.

This action, which was fought on the 1st of April, showed with what slender forces the spirit and fire of the British were able to defeat great bodies of the rebels. Tantia's force numbered 20,000, while Sir Hugh Rose's men were no more than 1200, of whom only 500 were Europeans.

Sir Hugh Rose determined to make the assault

on the city without delay. Next morning he was told that the breach in the wall was just large enough for the attempt, and the assault was fixed for the following morning, the 3rd.

It was three o'clock, with bright moonlight, when the columns marched out of camp. The sappers, the 3rd Europeans, and the Hyderabad Infantry were to scale the walls in three places, while the 86th Foot and the 25th Native Infantry were to attempt the breach. With tense excitement the men waited under cover for the roar of the guns, which was to be their signal for attack. The fateful 'boom!' was heard at length and the columns moved into the moonlight. The sappers went first with the ladders on their shoulders, then followed the troops with glistening swords and bayonets. Instantly from the walls of the town darted a sheet of fire, and round-shot and musket-bullets searched the ranks of the British. Still they kept steadily on. "We had upward of 200 yards to march through this fiendish fire," writes a medical officer who was with one of the scaling columns, "and we did it. The sappers planted the ladders against the wall in three places for the stormers to ascend; but the fire of the enemy waxed stronger, and amid the chaos of sounds, of volleys of musketry, and roaring of cannon, and hissing and bursting of rockets, stink-pots, infernal machines, huge stones, blocks of wood, and trees, all hurled upon their devoted heads, the

men wavered for a moment, and sheltered themselves behind stones. But the ladders were there, and there the sappers, animated by the heroism of their officers, kept firm hold until a wound or death struck them down beneath the walls. At this instant, on our right, three of the ladders broke under the weight of men."

The check was only momentary; the men picked themselves up, and the ladders were reared; and Lieutenant Dick, racing up one of them, sprang on the wall, calling for his men to follow, while another lieutenant named Meiklejohn leaped down among the rebels. Both these gallant young fellows were slain; but their men swarmed up and soon were in deadly conflict with the rebels on the walls.

Suddenly cries of triumph were heard—English cries, and the short sharp shouts of the native infantry. Now there came the sound of rushing feet, and into the rear of the defenders on the ramparts dashed the men who had seized the breach. Assailed in front and in rear the rebels yielded, and the fight went raging down the street which led to the palace. Every house was now the scene of a desperate defence and as desperate a storm; men who sought to escape were dragged out of hiding and slain. No quarter was given: had not these fiends slaughtered white men before the agonized eyes of their wives, sisters, and sweethearts, and then, in turn, murdered little children before the eyes of their mothers?

The doorways of houses were soon choked with corpses, the streets were heaped with them, while still the infuriated English and their native allies lusted after blood. The houses were fired, and as the British filled the long main street, the Ranee, who had fled from her palace to the fort, turned the guns upon them, and grape and canister stormed down upon the palace where now her enemies were dashing from room to room, fighting, and slaying without mercy. Soon the whole building was in their red hands, but they found forty sepoy troopers who held a room attached to the stables. The British fired the place, and soon out of the crackling furnace rushed the half-blinded rebels through the black swirling smoke, slashing and hacking wildly with their keen *tulwars*. But not one man escaped alive.

All day from dawn to dusk, and next day, the British sought out the hiding-places of their enemies and slaughtered them ruthlessly. They exulted the more when, as happened once or twice, a few sepoys held a house or a garden, either in the town or the suburbs. Few, indeed, were the mutineers who escaped. On the 5th it was discovered that the fort had been abandoned: the Ranee, with a few attendants, had stolen out during the previous night and had escaped to Calpee. With her departure the townsmen who survived thought they had leave to go also; and such as could escape the hands of the British fled from the town, and at last the dreadful city, filled

now with slain, and black with smoking ruins, lay beneath the flag of the British.

So exhausted were his troops that Sir Hugh Rose was compelled to give them three weeks' rest, while he collected supplies and ammunition. Then, on the 25th, leaving a small garrison behind him, he took the road to Calpee. Weary as they were with their fighting under a torrid sun, and from want of sleep, his soldiers trudged on, but their sufferings from lack of water were indescribable. Even as they marched they cried hysterically for some relief from their thirst; but, nevertheless, when at length they came up with the enemy at the town of Koonch, whither they had retreated, the British rallied their forces, and helped by the 71st Highlanders, who had reinforced them, broke the rebel ranks and sent them headlong in retreat. It was a battle gained by sick men, for even as the enemy retired the British soldiers were dropping dead in the ranks from heat apoplexy, and litter after litter, with officers and men within them, some already dead and others hysterical or delirious, were being borne to the field hospital in the rear.

Tantia, utterly defeated, fled away to his native village, while his broken troops, suffering almost as much from the heat and thirst as the British, dragged their weary limbs along and quarrelled as they went, the infantry accusing the cavalry of cowardice, and the cavalry retorting in like terms.

Nevertheless, in a few days, further rebellious leaders having joined them, the wreck of the Gwalior contingent plucked up heart, and the Ranee of Jhansi and the Nabob of Banda urged them to make yet another stand at Calpee. All knew how heavily the British soldiers were suffering from the effects of the heat, and their confidence increased as they realized that the strength of their enemies was failing. They therefore sent out an army to meet Sir Hugh's force, with which they came in touch at Gowlowlee, some six miles east of Calpee.

The British, indeed, were in sore straits. Sir Hugh himself had suffered five sunstrokes, but had resolved that he would never rest, whatever the cost to his health, until Calpee was taken. The troops were sickening daily, half of them being in hospital and the other half ailing. The surgeons reported that if the men were kept in the field much longer they would all be prostrated. The leaders of the enemy issued an order to all its men, saying that "as the European infidels either died or had to go into hospital from fighting in the sun, they were never to be attacked before ten o'clock in the day, in order that they might feel its force."

In spite of all Sir Hugh pushed on. He turned the flank of the enemy at Calpee, and his batteries bombarded the town. Repeated attacks, however,

were made by the rebels by way of many ravines which lay between the British camp and the town. On the 22nd the full force of the rebels threw itself upon the British at Gowlowlee, and this struggle was one of the hardest which Rose had yet had to sustain. Repeatedly did the insurgents charge in their thousands right up to the guns of the British. At the critical moment, when the guns seemed about to be lost, Sir Hugh himself charged at the head of the Camel Corps, and so fierce was his attack that the enemy was driven in disorder from the field. The rebels took refuge in Calpee, but next day Rose pushed forward, the insurgents retired from the city, and were pursued by the cavalry, leaving in the hands of the British all their guns. In the streets of the town hardly a living person was to be seen, but here and there pariah dogs snarled and snatched over the dead body of some sepoy whom the British guns had killed.

The men rejoiced that now the end of the campaign having come, both they and their intrepid General could look forward to long days of rest. Sir Hugh Rose prepared to break up his forces; on the 1st June he issued his farewell order to the troops, and in a few days he intended to start for the hills to recuperate his shattered health. He had sent a small column south-west to keep the rebels on the run, but he, and most of those in authority, felt that the rebels of Central India would give little further

trouble. They were broken and disheartened, they had been thrust with heavy slaughter from every stronghold they had possessed, and their scattered bands could now be left to skulk back to their native villages, or to be rounded up, arrested, and executed by the civil power.

On the 1st of June, however, Sir Hugh Rose heard that the rebels were heading toward Gwalior, west of Calpee, and on the 4th he received the incredible news that the Ranee of Jhansi, with Tantia Topee, had fought and defeated the loyal ruler of Gwalior, had seized the fortress and the treasury, and had proclaimed the Nana Sahib as *peishwa*, or king, of the Mahrattas.

The chief of Gwalior, by name Sindia, had throughout the mutiny proved himself to be one of the most steadfast friends of the British. He was the chief of the great Mahratta people, and Gwalior was the capital of that erstwhile powerful State. His warlike followers, the Gwalior contingent, famous as the finest body of troops attached to any native kingdom, had rebelled; but all the efforts of their leaders had failed to make Sindia forget his oaths of fealty to the British *raj*, or his affection and admiration for the representative of that power at his court, Major Charters Macpherson. When, therefore, the white authorities and the natives throughout India heard that one of the most loyal native chieftains had been ousted from his kingdom by the impudent

rebels, the feeling of apprehension was almost as great as that which thrilled through the length and breadth of India when the news of the outbreak at Meerut set men wondering what would be the end.

The possible results of this daring stroke were instantly grasped by Sir Hugh Rose. The prestige thus gained at one blow by the rebels might suffice in a little while to revive the embers of the mutiny to the fiercest flames. If the rebels at Gwalior were not instantly assailed and defeated, all the blood shed in suppressing the revolt would have been shed in vain, and everything would have to be done over again.

On the 6th June Sir Hugh Rose left Calpee, having already by telegraph given orders to various British generals in different parts of the country near-by to converge with their forces upon Gwalior, and thus close upon the rebels and block them in. Sir Hugh determined to strike at once, and to strike a shattering blow.

He pushed up with his own weary battalions until he reached Morar, travelling by night in order to spare his men the terrible heat of the day. At Morar he shattered a force of the rebels who wished to bar his way. Then he waited for Sindia, whose presence with the British would give great weight in the eyes of the natives generally.

Brigadier Smith, who had been dispersing rebels

in a neighbouring district, had by this time arrived near Gwalior, in accordance with Sir Hugh Rose's instructions, and found himself in front of the rebel army. He thrust horse artillery and infantry at their serried ranks, which retired before the onslaught, revealing the Gwalior contingent itself, dressed in their red uniforms and mounted on fine horses. The infantry beat back their charge, and then Smith sent in a squadron of the 8th Hussars, who drove them through the cantonment immediately outside the city. Among the men of the contingent rode a woman dressed in a man's garments. It was the Ranee of Jhansi. As she dashed away a hussar cut her down, and it was only later that her identity was discovered.

Next day Sir Hugh Rose joined forces with Smith, and together they attacked the rebels beneath the rock on which Gwalior, the Gibraltar of India, rears its giant citadel 300 feet above. So fierce was the onslaught of the British forces that, after a combat of only five hours, the army of Tantia Topee melted away, pursued steadily by a column led by Napier.

The fort still held out, and all night guns were fired at intervals at the British troops down below. In the morning an officer named Lieutenant Rose asked a brother officer, Lieutenant Waller, whether he was game for an attack on the fort, seeing that from the sound of the gun-fire it could not be held



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in strength. Waller was quite willing, and the two officers, calling together a few of their native soldiers, and getting a burly blacksmith to go with them, mounted the road leading to the citadel. Six gateways yielded to the tools and the strength of the blacksmith, and they had entered the recesses of the place before the alarm was given and a gun was trained upon them by the slender garrison. They pushed on, however, until on turning a corner a number of Moslem fanatics dashed upon them. The struggle was fierce, and for a time the result was doubtful, until Lieutenant Rose, gathering his men into a group, led them in one final rush against the enemy. Rose fell mortally wounded, but the fanatics were beaten and slain. It was found that the garrison had consisted only of these men, and of their number two only knew how to load and fire a gun.

The same day Sindia was ceremoniously ushered again into his capital; squadrons of hussars and light dragoons escorted him to his palace, and his people, from their doors and windows or thronging the streets, showed their delight at receiving their hereditary monarch back in safety.

The lesson of Sindia's restoration was one which made a deep impression on all the native princes, loyal and disloyal, throughout India. The danger menaced by the action of the rebels in ousting a loyal supporter of the British from his kingdom

had been met with promptness and energy, and the enemy had been overwhelmed and scattered. It showed once more that the British were determined to be masters of India, and that their power was strong enough not only to stamp out the embers of mutiny, but to protect and reward loyal princes.

Little more was required to scatter the remaining forces of mutineers and revolted rajahs. Oudh was wholly cleared of rebels by the end of the year, and most of the princes and chiefs had come in and submitted. The rebels who had sinned too much to expect mercy threw away their arms and stole back to their homes, or, becoming desperate, took to the jungles of the Terai, where Nana Sahib and a few of his followers still lurked, preyed upon by pestilence, wild beasts, and the Gurkhas. For a little while Tantia Topee kept his liberty, hoping to escape with some of his followers in order to raise the banner of revolt in the governments of Bombay and Madras. But though he moved swiftly, the British columns moved as quickly, headed him off, kept him constantly on the move, and finally, exhausted and dispirited, he gave himself up. He was tried and found guilty of treason against the British *raj*, and was hanged on the 18th of April 1859.

At the end of the preceding October, by proclamation of the Queen, read by Lord Canning at Allahabad at a great Durbar at which all the loyal

native princes were assembled, the government of India was entirely transferred from the East India Company to the Queen, to be governed through her Viceroy. The reign of 'John Company' was at an end.

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